

How can a mathematics teacher give PE classes in rural China?

An exploration on exporting Finnish class teachers' education to rural China.

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

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Abstract

Finnish education export has been a popular topic in recent years. Despite of the popularity of this topic, related studies in Finland are still at general level on challenges, opportunities, strategies, and etc. This thesis research aims at extending the current studies to identify a specific education export product that can be competitive in the international market and a potential foreign market that this education product can be exported. Literature studies on teachers' education in Finland show that teachers' education, especially class teacher education, enjoys a good reputation as it prepares excellent teachers for Finnish primary schools. On the other side, literature studies on Chinese class teacher education programs for rural areas indicate that there is an urgent need in expertise to get improved. Thus the ultimate goal of this thesis is to find out how Finland's expertise in class teacher education can be "exported" to China for rural areas.

To meet that goal, an applied qualitative research was conducted by gathering information from various stakeholders: Chinese universities who are currently running the class teacher education programs, class teacher students, local governments in charge, headmasters and teachers of primary schools in rural areas, Finnish agency involved in education export to China. The data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and it was analyzed through framework approach, which generated eight major categories as the result of empirical findings. The findings have three major contributions: 1) they confirm several severe problems that current class teacher education programs are facing; 2) they establish a pairing between these problems and specific Finnish expertise in class teacher education; 3) they identify a reasonable entry strategy for Finnish organizations, which is firstly offering professional trainings, then the gained experience can be used explore other entry strategy of franchising or join-venture.

In the end, the author is calling for a more holistic field research with more universities and government officials to better shape Finland's educational offering. The author is also suggesting to tap this research problem through action research or framing the problem as a "wicked problem" to inspire innovative solutions. Based on the findings, the author also gives practical recommendations for those who are involved in education export to China: be sensitive to the potential niche market; and know your users rather than just the clients who pay.

Keywords Finnish Education Export, Class Teacher Education, Foreign Market Entry Strategy, Primary Schools in Rural China.

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1.Introduction

In China, when we make fun of someone who is bad with numbers, we always say that, “Your mathematics must be taught by a PE teacher!” Because you will never find a PE teacher who is able to give you a mathematics class. However, for Finns, very often the mathematics teacher and the PE teacher are actually the same person, who is called class teacher. So my study aims at how can this class teacher system can be properly applied in China to help our PE teachers to teach mathematics and beyond.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Finnish Basic Education and Teachers’ Education

According to Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the current basic education in Finland refers to a nine-year study for students between seven and sixteen years old in comprehensive schools. The study is separated into two parts: primary schools (grade one to six) and lower secondary schools (grade seven to nine). Schools and teachers need to follow the national core curriculum as a guideline to deal with core contents of each subject, assessments for students, education for kids with special needs and student welfare. But local education providers enjoy a high level of autonomy in deciding their own curricula as long as it stays within the framework of national core curriculum. Meanwhile, teachers can also choose different teaching methods and teaching materials as they want to achieve the objectives of the national core curriculum.

In primary school, classes are mostly taught by class teachers, and in lower secondary school, classes are usually given by specialized subject teachers. And becoming a teacher, especially a primary school teacher, is not an easy task in Finland. The teachers’ education system guarantees that “only Finland’s best and brightest are able to fulfill those professional dreams” (Sahlberg, 2010). All of these student teachers have to acquire a Master’s level university degree, and the selection criteria of entering the departments of teacher education is very strict: normally only one-tenth of all the applicants will be enrolled in the program

of primary school teachers, and they need to have “good scores”, “excellent interpersonal skills”, and “personal commitment” to teaching career (Sahlberg, 2011a).

And in order to make sure that the teachers’ education is coherent, Finnish universities, who carry out teachers’ education, are coordinated nationally. While at the same time, each university still has the freedom to create their own curricula based on their resources allocation (Sahlberg, 2011a). In general, the main study of education is composed of educational theory, pedagogical studies and subject didactics and practices (Kansanen, n.d.). And on top of this, a “research-based teacher education” has also been emphasized, which refers to the integration of “educational theories”, “research methodologies”, and “practices” into the pre-service trainings for teacher students (Sahlberg, 2011a). This research-based approach enables Finnish teachers to enhance their professional autonomy (Jyrhänmä & Maarainen, 2012 cited in Schatz, 2016b), and it also contributes to “increasing the problem solving capacity of the education system” (Buchberger & Buchberger, 2003 cited in Darling-Hammond, 2009). As an important part of the pre-service trainings, teaching practice usually happens in the teachers’ training schools or model schools which are associated with universities, and teacher students are required to take teaching practices from basic to more advanced levels (Sahlberg, 2011a)” along with their academic studies. In the end, to complete the study, all students need to compose a final master thesis on a topic related to his or her educational practice. On average, teacher students usually spend five to seven and half years to finish their studies (Sahlberg, 2011a).

1.1.2 Finnish PISA Success

In the year of 2000, Finland, for the first time, joined the PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment) test, and the result surprised the whole world. Finnish students scored number one in reading literacy, number four in mathematical literacy and number three in scientific literacy, which makes Finland the top among all the OECD countries (Jouni et al, 2002). This surprising success has put the Finnish basic education under the spotlight internationally, which is also known as “Finnish Miracle”. This Finnish miracle kept going in the 2003 and 2006 PISA tests, where Finnish students dominated the ranking among OECD countries (Kupiainen, Hautamäki and Karjalainen, 2009).

People kept wondering that how a remote northern European country, all of a sudden, could occupy the top position of an international educational testing. Education experts from Finland and other countries were trying to look for the reasons behind this success. A few scholars (Kupiainen, Hautamäki and Karjalainen, 2009) pointed out that the foundation of the success was laid down in the 1970s when Finland started their education reform by introducing 9-year compulsory schools and university-level teacher education. Their (Kupiainen, Hautamäki and Karjalainen, 2009) studies attributed the success to a well-designed education system of education authority, pupil welfare, curriculum reform, and teachers' education. A group of Finnish researchers also dug into the factors that contributed to the high score in PISA test, and they found that a combination of "comprehensive pedagogy, students' own interest and leisure activities, the structure of education system, the teacher education, school practices and Finnish culture" was the reason behind this success (Välijärvi, et al., 2002; Simola, 2005). In the study of an American educator (Darling-Hammond, 2009), she studied the reason from the perspective of "Finnish Teaching and Learning System", in which she identified that the highly skilled teachers are the key in designing localized curricula, carrying out effective and innovative teaching practices, and finally giving the suitable assessment and support for each individual student. Darling-Hammond's view was supported by Sahlberg (2010), who studied the teacher's education and development system in Finland and attributed the "Finnish Miracle" to the teachers' education in Finland as well.

1.1.3 Finnish Higher Education Export

Finland's success in PISA has made Finnish education system well-known among education experts. While Finland was still "shy" about their success in basic education, other western countries were already making billions by introducing their good education (mostly higher education) to the world. Thanks to globalization and the popularity of English, major English-speaking countries, like UK, Australia and United States, have been the pioneers in attracting international students to study in these countries. In 2002, there were over two hundred fifty million international students in Australia, and they spent about \$5.2 billion (Kenyon and Koshy, 2003 cited in Carrington, Meek, and Wood 2007). But Australia was not satisfied with purely attracting students to study within its country border, it was also

offering off-shore programs in order to reach out to more foreign students. According to ICEF Monitor's industry news (ICEF, 2015): in 2014/15 fiscal year, Australian education exports reached AUS\$18.1 billion (~12.5 billion euros), surpassing Australian's tourism industry by several billion dollars.

Seeing the potential of education export and being confident in its own education system, Finnish government, institutes and other related organizations are hoping that they can leverage on the success of PISA tests to promote the Finnish education export (Schatz, 2015). In 2010, Ministry of Education and Culture published "*Finnish Education Export Strategy*", in which they believed that "Finland's strengths in education field must be utilized and education must be developed into successful export articles for Finland", and they also clearly marked their ambition to be one of the leading education exporters in the world. But Schatz (2016) pointed out that this strategy "seem overly ambitious" and "Finland is still far from being a renowned education exporter". Despite the failure of meeting the short-term target, Finland is still moving forward with its effort in promoting education export, which is considered as one of the important potential sources of national income. Education Export Finland (originally called Future Learning Finland and founded in 2010) is aiming at gathering different organizations of "first-class private companies, vocational institutions, and higher education institutions" to offer "Finnish educational know-how" and "learning solutions" for its international clients (Finnish Excellence in Education, n.d.). And the recent policy of charging non-EU students' tuition is one of the initial steps towards making profits from Finnish education export.

Finland, as one of the Nordic countries, has its advantage in national English proficiency. Up to 83% of Finnish higher education institutes offer English-taught programs (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014) with over four hundred full degree programs available in English, which enables international students to study in Finland without acquiring Finnish language. But the next question is to whom that Finns export their education? By looking at the website of Education Export Finland (EEF), this organization has done several education projects with other European countries, middle eastern countries, and countries in the far east Asia. While it remains unknown that how many of these projects actually generate profits, it does show its potential in reaching to the international market, and that is one of the most important prerequisites for successfully exporting Finnish education.

1.1.4 Educational Cooperation between Finland and China

Among all the countries that Finland has established educational cooperation, China has been a very important partner in the past few decades. In 1984, Finland and China signed the first agreement related to promoting communication in cultural, educational and scientific areas (Kiina, 1984). A Memorandum of Understanding between two countries on mutual recognition of higher education degrees was signed in Helsinki, 12 September 2006, which makes it possible for Chinese students to study in Finland to pursue a mutually recognized degree (Kiina, 2010). At the same time, when pushing the Finnish education export, Finnish government has also stressed the importance of the Chinese market. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs published the Finland's China Action Plan (2010), in which "promoting cooperation between universities, schools, and cultural institutions" and "supporting Finnish education exports to China" were clearly stated.

In 2015, to further strengthen the cooperation on education, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Finland signed a detailed Memorandum of Cooperation, covering the areas of "information sharing and dialogues on education policies and practices; exchange of government scholarships; joint curriculum and program development between relative institutes; teacher training and exchange; student and expert mobility; scientific and research cooperation; joint projects; set-up of learning and innovation related centers; and local level cooperation" (Kiina, 2015). While this memorandum provides a guideline for educational cooperation at different levels, various cooperation between local governments, higher education institutes and private companies have already started long before this memorandum: City of Shanghai and city of Espoo became sister cities in 1998 (Espoo, 2017); Aalto University established Sino-Finnish Center Tongji University in Shanghai in 2010 (About SFC, n.d.); EduclusterFinland, a private education organization that belongs to Jyväskylä University, has organized several teachers' training programs for Chinese teachers since the opening of their Shanghai office in early 2014. So far, the education cooperation is mostly focused on higher education, while the most well-known educational asset of Finland, the basic education, hasn't received enough attention from both countries.

1.1.5 Basic Education in rural China (with a focus on Primary Education)

In 2014, Chinese government has invested 2.6 trillion CNY (around 354 billion euros), about 4.15% of its GDP, in education sector (Renmin Net, 2015). In 2011, the government has put six hundred ten billion CNY and three hundred eighty billion CNY in primary schools in the urban and rural area respectively (National Bureau of Statistics of China). Despite the huge investments, there is still a significant gap in education quality between urban and rural areas (21 CEDU, 2013). In their report, the 21st Century Education Research Institute also generalized three common problems with the school in rural areas: First, in the rural areas, many schools are in isolated locations, and the school facilities are in bad conditions; Second, the funding for these schools is not sufficient; Third one lies in the imbalanced structure of teachers' team. Among these three problems, the third one has been emphasized by many Chinese scholars (Wang and Wang, 2004; Wang and Zhao, 2010; Liu, 2011; Yang and Liu, 2015). According to Liu (2011), the teachers' team problems in rural areas are:

- 1) Low academic backgrounds of the rural teachers. There are only a few teachers who have attended four-year full-time university studies;
- 2) Aging problem of the teachers. The majority of the teachers in rural areas are above middle age, and it is very difficult to attract or keep young teachers to stay in the rural areas;
- 3) Decreasing percentage of high professional ranking teachers in rural areas. This is partly because of the unfair current assessment system and the movement of good teachers to cities;
- 4) Poorly structured team of subject teachers. Unlike in Finland, the primary school teachers in China are trained to teach one specific subject. In rural schools, subject teachers of Chinese and Mathematics are the majority in schools, while subject teachers like music, sports, and arts are minorities. For some schools, as they don't have enough "minor" subject teachers, they usually ask one teacher to take care of several different subjects, which the teachers were not trained for. Or in some cases, subjects like arts and music are substituted with Chinese or mathematics classes (Wang, 2006; Wang and Zheng, 2016).

In order to build a better teachers' team in rural areas, one of the solutions is to train specialized class teacher for rural areas. Even though class teacher system is a well-established teaching practice in western countries, it is a relatively new phenomenon in China. In metropolitan cities like Nanjing and Shenzhen, some schools have started piloting program of having one class teacher teaching a smaller size class, around 40 students (Eduthought, 2015). But class size of forty students is still much larger than the normal class size in countries with class teacher system, for example, the class size in Finland is less than twenty-five students. While it is a real challenge of having small size classes in urban areas, in rural areas, the smaller class size might be more attainable: due to urbanization, the number of enrolled students is decreasing in some of the schools in rural areas, and as a result, the class size is getting smaller and smaller. In some schools, there are only about twenty to thirty kids in total with class size smaller than ten (Wu, 2014). This situation is actually favoring the possibility of adopting a class teacher system in rural schools, where one teacher can teach different subjects with a reasonable small class size. In recent years, class teacher education programs for rural China have already started in Zhejiang Province, Hunan Province, Guangxi province, and Chongqing (Yang, 2014).

1.2 Research Gap

Even though the concept of internationalization has been discussed in the field of political studies for centuries, the discussion on education internationalization has gained popularity only since the 1980s (Knight, 2003). With the rising phenomenon of international students studying in major English-speaking countries and higher institutes opening up branch schools in foreign countries, scholars have looked into general aspects of the internationalization of higher education: motivations behind internationalization; the internationalization approaches and strategies, and national and regional overview (Bennell and Pearce, 2003; Qian, 2003; Knight, 2004; Altbach and Knight, 2007; Healey, 2008).

Following this trend of being internationalized, Finnish government is pushing the internationalization process of Finnish Higher Education Institutes, and some of these institutes have been actively involved, for example University of Helsinki, Aalto University, and University of Jyväskylä. There are researchers who pay attention to this emerging

phenomenon and started to look into the internationalization process of Finnish higher education, but their studies are still at very general level rather than looking into a specific area of higher education internationalization, for example, into a very specific country that Finland has been able to reach to. Finland's China Action Plan has recognized the critical importance of Chinese market for Finnish institutes, yet only a few scholars have studied in depth about "Finnish education export to China". Yuzhuo Cai, one of the founding member of the Chinese Education Research and Exchange Center (CEREC) at the University of Tampere, has done various studies on Finnish higher education export, and he has done a few comparative studies between Chinese and Finnish Higher Education systems. However, he hasn't looked into a specific education "product" that can actually be exported to China.

My research comes to extend the study further by looking into exporting Finnish class teacher's education to China, which is an area that hasn't been studied before. This thesis research will be performed as an active research to meet the educational challenges in Finland and China: in Finland, it answers to the call of national strategy of education export, while in China, it aims at finding one solution for the weak teachers' team in primary schools in rural areas.

1.3 Research Objectives & Research Questions

Finland basic education is internationally famous for many reasons. Many education experts and government officials have visited Finland, hoping to find the mysterious secret and bring it back to their own countries. However, one of the most important reasons that Finnish students excel in international ranking lies in its teachers' education system, which cannot be transferred to another country or area easily, not to even mention some rural areas in China. So the underlying objective of this research is to find out how to "export" Finnish class teachers' education to Chinese primary school teachers in rural areas. Based on this objective, the research questions for this thesis are illustrated as following.

Main Question:

How can Finnish Class Teachers' education be "exported" to China for the primary schools

in rural areas?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the real needs of these primary schools in rural China?
2. What kind of class teachers' training programs are undertaken in China? And what are the challenges or problems that they are facing?
3. How can Finland provide a customized “product” to solve these problems? And in which way that Finland can deliver this product?

These questions will be used to give guidance on which areas that literatures should be reviewed and on how to design the field research, which will be elaborated in the following sections of Literature Review and Methodology.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The first Introduction section presented the general background of why this thesis research is necessary, and it introduced the research questions. Following the Introduction section, there will be another five sections. The second section will be focused on Literature Review, which is a systematic check of all the literatures related to this topic in order to build an academic foundation to understand every aspect of this topic and identify the key areas that require further field research. Based on literature studies, the third section of Methodology will introduce the design and reality of the research, data collection and analysis methods. The fourth section of Empirical Findings will present the findings under each major category for further interpretation. Discussion is the fifth section, which aims at finding the answers for the main research question by linking the findings with previous sub- research questions. Conclusion will be in the end, and some implications will be introduced to give some ideas in future research direction and business ideas.

2. Literature Review

According to Hart (1998), literature review is “the selection of available documents on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these document in relation to the research being proposed”. Based on the introduction section and main research question, this thesis research covers three major topics of Finnish education export, teacher education and foreign market entry strategy. However, education export itself is tightly linked with internationalization of higher education and education service trade as they provide the theoretical bases for the studies of education export. Thus, this literature review section is organized in the following structure:

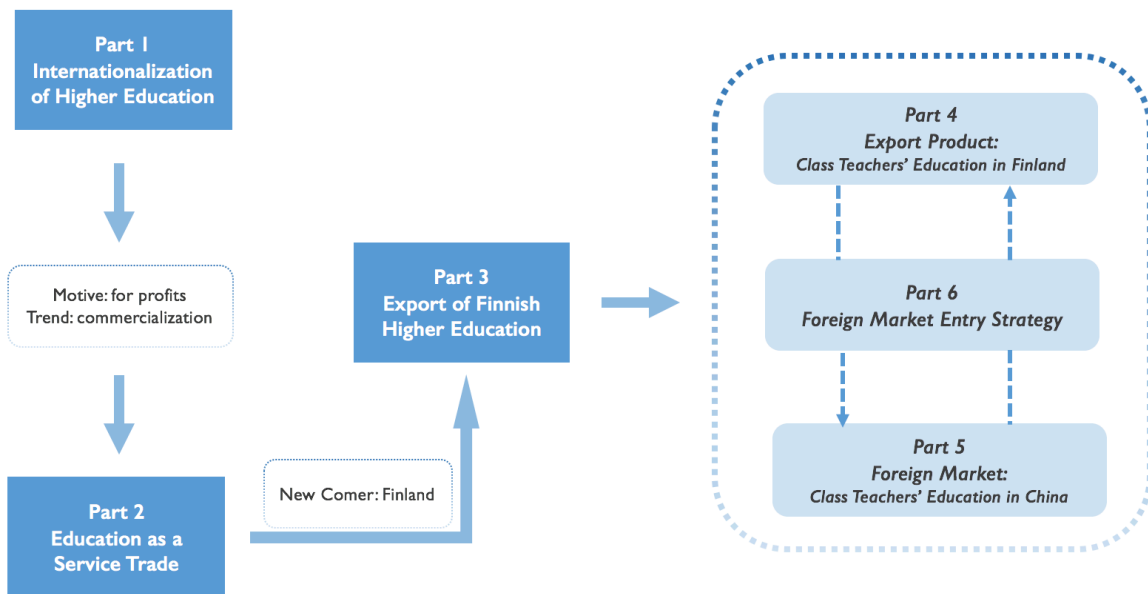


Figure 1. Structure of Literature Review

In the following part of this section, related literatures on “Internationalization of Higher Education” will be introduced first, then with the trend in commercialization, “Education as a service trade” will be introduced as well. These first two parts build the theoretical base for discussing “Export of Finnish Higher Education”. Then, under Finnish higher education, there are three parts to be covered: “Export Product: Class Teachers’ Education in Finland”, its “Foreign market: Class Teachers’ Education in China”, and the “Foreign Market Entry Strategy”, which links the product and the market.

2.1 The Internationalization of Higher Education

2.1.1 Definition of the internationalization of higher education

Since an increasing number of higher education institutions are actively involved in international activities, a clear definition of the internationalization of higher education is needed for further academic studies. Definitions on internationalization of higher education has evolved overtime and interpreted by various scholars. Based on the studies of previous scholars' definitions, Knight (2004) proposed a new working definition of internationalization of higher education as "Internationalization at the national/sector and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education". This definition of two separated levels allows scholars to look at the internationalization process from "top-down" approach at national/sector level through "policy, funding, programs, and regulatory frameworks" and from "bottom-up" approach at institutional level, where the "real process of internationalization is taking place" (Knight, 2004). And this definition has been widely accepted in academic studies as non-biased and comprehensive (Zolfaghari, Sabran, and Zolfaghari, 2009; Dewey and Duff, 2009; Jowi, 2009). However, Hawawimi (2011) argued that the ultimate goal of internationalization is "to integrate the institution into the emerging global knowledge and learning network" rather than "to integrate an international dimension into the existing institutional setting", thus he (2011) suggested a broader definition as "the internationalization of higher education institutions is the process of integrating the institution and its key stakeholders – its students, faculty, and staff – into a globalizing world". Also, under the current development of knowledge economy, Barrett (2015) pointed out that "internationalization has been broadly used to describe trends in higher education", and the internationalization of higher education "consists of academic mobility, incoming to host foreign students and outgoing for students to study abroad", as well as "international standards in degree content, quality assurances, and recognition".

The fact is that scholars tend to define the internationalization of higher education in a way

that best serves its purpose (De Wit, 2002 cited in Knight, 2004), and that is why there are various definitions from different perspectives. However, in this thesis, the definition from Knight (2004) will be adopted since it remains to be the most comprehensive and cited definition so far.

2.1.2 Motives behind the process of internationalization

“Rationales are reflected in the objectives, policies, and programs that are developed and eventually implemented. Rationales dictate the kind of benefits or expected outcomes one would expect from internationalization efforts.”

---- Knight Jane, 2015

De Wit (2001) said that rationales “address the why of internationalization”, which “imply different means and ends to internationalization”. The subject of the motives (or the drivers) behind the internationalization of higher education has been widely studied by various scholars (De Wit, 2001; Knight & de Wit, 1997, 1999 cited in Knight, 2004), and the studies are concentrated on four different dimensions, which are: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic. De Wit (2001) further listed sub-rationales under these four rational groups:

Table 1. Rationales of the Internationalization of Higher Education

(Note: Reprinted from De Wit (2001))

Rationales Groups	Sub-rationales
Political	Foreign Policy, Technical Assistance, Peace and Mutual Understanding, National Identity, Regional Identity
Economic	Economic Growth and Competitiveness, Labor Market, National Educational Demand, Financial Incentives for institutions and governments
Social/Cultural	National Cultural Identity, Intercultural Understanding, Citizenship Development, Social and Community Development
Academic	An International Dimension to Research and Teaching, Extension of the Academic Horizon, Institution-Building, Profile/Status, Enhancement of Quality and International Academic Standards

However, de Wit (2001) pointed out that this categorization of rationales failed to address the “diversity of stakeholders’ groups in higher education”, and some of the rationales are “overlapping” between different stakeholders’ groups due to difference in their “hierarchy in priorities”. Knight (2004) also pointed out that there are some new rationales, for example the competition in branding internationally, that did not fit into the four existing categories. Further more, with the increasing importance of differentiating the rationales between national level and institutional level, Knight (2004) proposed another model of looking into the rationales through two levels: national level, such as human resource development and national development; institutional level, for example international reputation.

Meanwhile, some scholars are studying the rationales from a “demand-supply” perspective. By looking at both the “supply” and “demand” sides of the international higher education, Healey (2008) has found out that, unlike the internationalization in business, the internationalization of higher education was not driven fundamentally by economic reasons, but rather a complex of “special factors”: From the “supply” side, the most popular destinations for international students were five English-speaking countries, and their initial international activities were mostly caused by the “government policy” of reducing the subsidies to the higher education institutions and deregulating the tuition policies for international students, which encouraged the institutions to be more involved into international activities, for example, recruiting international students and setting up overseas campuses;

From the “demand” side, mostly in developing economies, the growth of the higher education did not meet the rapid development of population growth and economic growth, which made “studying abroad” a lucrative alternative for those who are able to pay for it (Healey, 2008). Bashir (2007) also looked at the growth of international higher education from the “demand” and “supply” sides. Compared with the study of Healey, Bashir (2007) listed more factors from the governmental perspective: governments on the “demand” side are hoping to get “perceived economy-wide benefits from international education and research”, and they think that “skill development” can help to promote the foreign direct investment; and governments on the “supply” side are pushing the internationalization of higher education in order to build a better “country’s brand image” and to establish “trade and investment links” between these collaborated countries (Bashir, 2007).

Even though each higher education institute or each government is probably having their own specific rationales in participating international activities, the studies of rationales in general help us to understand why global internationalization matters for higher education sector (Knight, 2008).

2.1.3 Challenges of Internationalization of Higher Education

While most of the scholars agree on the importance of getting internationalized in this globalized world, the path to internationalization is paved with all kinds of challenges and obstacles that calls for special attention from institutions and nations when they are internationalizing their higher education. So far, scholars identified the following major challenges.

Challenge 1: Quality assurance and accreditation. The most concerned challenge is “quality assurance and accreditation” (OECD, 1999; Larsen, Martin, and Morris, 2002; Altbach, Knight, 2007; Van der Wande, 2003; Helms, 2008). When higher education institutes are expanding their international operations, they usually find that there is “no agreed international quality framework for higher education” (Larsen, Martin, and Morris, 2002), which leads to the following questions of 1) how higher education institutes from the “sending countries” can prove that they have high quality of education and 2) how the regulators from “receiving countries” can evaluate the international education providers to make sure that they actually meet the national quality and accreditation standards (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Meanwhile, the tendency in commercialization of national or international accreditation may cause new problem that institutions are competing in getting better international ranking rather than improving their quality (Shin and Harman, 2009), and the worst scenarios would be some accreditation bodies “selling” accreditation without independent evaluation system (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Knight, 2013).

Challenge 2: Governmental policies and regulations. Education sector plays a vital role in national development. As part of the national identity, education also serves a political purpose (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009 cited in Barrett, 2015, p. 7), and “higher education historically has been of high sensitivity politically” (Barrett, 2015).

Usually higher education is perceived as “public goods”, so each nation has to implement general control over education providers despite their public or private backgrounds. Government on the demand side of internationalization of higher education usually protect the national education system from “unfair external competition” by taking advantage of the policy of “market access”, which affects the entering and operations of foreign education providers (Barrett, 2015). On the other side of education providers (most in developed countries), the debate over “higher education as a public good” has also affected public’s view towards the internationalization of higher education. For a long time in history, higher education was mostly funded by public funding while serving public purposes of “enhancing civil society” and “contributing to economic productivity” (Barrett, 2015). However, with the increase of enrolled international students, the public money for supporting foreign students is receiving more and more doubts (Healey, 2008).

Challenge 3: Economic ups and downs. Till today, most of the higher education institutions are fully or mostly funded by the public funding. Since the public funding is affected by national economic conditions, the higher education sector is also subject to the influence of economic ups and downs (Shin and Harman, 2009). For example, the upward economic growth in China has contributed the rapid development of the internationalization of higher education. While at the same time, the lack of financial support is making some nations, for example Sudan, not even be able to guarantee basic level of higher education, not mention the international activities (Zolfaghari, Sabran and Zolfaghari, 2009).

Challenge 4: Brain drain. With the increasing mobility of people, especially those “professional/skilled workers”, there is an emerging issue that countries are competing for the most skilled and talented people internationally (Knight, 2008) For developed countries, they are better off in this competition by attracting the best talents to study in their home universities and later work in their countries. However, the competition may lead the developing countries into a “brain drain” dilemma as these talented students may not come back to contribute their home countries with the knowledge or skills that they learnt abroad. But as Altbach and Knight (2007) have pointed out, this is the “price” that these developing countries have to pay.

However, with the advancement in globalization and liberalization in international trade, there will be good solutions for, at least, the first two challenges in regional areas. One good example is the Bologna Process in EU, which has greatly promoted students and professional mobility within EU by creating a common recognition of degrees and credits among EU member countries (Crosier and Parveva, 2013). Successful examples like this are affirming that the trend of internationalizing higher education is moving forward even with challenges and difficulties ahead.

2.1.4 Future Trends in the Internationalization of Higher Education

As mentioned in the previous section, the internationalization of higher education is a dominant trend in this globalized world. Based on the studies of a few scholars' articles on internationalization of higher education, we can identify a few other sub-trends that are pushing the internationalization process of higher education forward.

Trend 1: Popularity of English. The major English-speaking countries have enjoyed the benefits of having the international language, i.e., English, as their native language (Healey, 2008; University of Jyväskylä, 2012). At the same time, instead of using their own languages, Northern European countries have started offering English programs to attract international students.

Trend 2: Internationalization of curriculum. In line with the use of English as the world language, there is also a new trend that curriculums are becoming internationally standardized (Altbach and Knight, 2007). But it is not just curriculum that is getting standardized, the whole higher education sector is looking for an international or regional standards in order to promote the education exchange between different countries and regions (Barrett, 2015). Following the good example of Bologna Process, several organizations in Latin America are trying to push the higher education on the same trajectory.

Trend 3: Growing number of international students and concentrated destinations. Regarding the student body of higher education, De Wit and Hunter (2015) pointed out that the international students for taking degree programs will keep growing and

the main destinations will still be developed countries. However, due to the rapid economic and education development in some developing countries, there will be a growing competition in attracting international students from these higher education institutes in developing countries, for example, China (Healey, 2008; De Wit and Hunter, 2015).

Trend 4: Future development of Online education. With the rapid development in internet and communication technologies (ICT), e-learning used to enjoy a lot of attention for people who wanted to have access to quality education through distance learning, however, till today, e-learning has not proved itself to be an attractive option for international students (Larsen, Martin, and Morris, 2002). But Lester (2013) strongly believed that e-learning for higher education will disrupt the traditional education industry. De Wit and Hunter (2015) also think that more advanced virtual technology will increase the learning experience of e-learning.

Trend 5: Profits driven from both private and public sectors. Larsen (Martin and Morris; 2002) pointed out a new phenomenon of increasing participation in internationalization of higher education from private sectors. For governments, the introduction of private education providers can serve as “an easy solution to the need to increase access without raising the public budget for higher education” (Shin and Harman, 2009). Even though they (Larsen, Martin, and Morris, 2002) were not sure if the private providers were gaining enough profits, the expansion of their operations in Canada and America could be a sign of profit potential. But it is not just the private sectors that are driven by the profits, more and more public higher education institutes are actively involved in international activities with a commercial-oriented interest as well. Shin and Harman (2009) found out that in practice many public institutions were operating international projects, for example joint degree programs, with a purpose of chasing profits.

Among these five trends, the most discussed trend is commercialization of international higher education. Though there is a concern that whether the commercialization will undermine the nature of higher education as a social product, the undeniable fact is that many national governments are pushing the commercialization process, and more educational organizations are getting commercially oriented. This is exactly what Naidoo (2003) has

said, *“the perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun...”*.

2.2 Education Business as a Service Trade

In 1986, the New Zealand government started a new legislation of charging international students the full fees for their courses, which marked the change from supporting foreign students, especially students from developing countries, to trying to gain economic benefits from international students with a purpose of easing the financial burdens on domestic higher education institutions (Smart and Ang, 1993), which is also known as the shift from “aid to trade” in international higher education sector (Smart and Ang, 1993; Collins, 2006; Knight, 2006). From that time, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and United States all started their commercialization process of higher education, and these five English-speaking countries have greatly benefited from selling higher education as a “commodity” to international students (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

Meanwhile in continental Europe, the governments, scholars, higher education institutions and students’ groups were still debating about the public nature of higher education for everyone, including the students from foreign countries. But as time passed, most of European countries have switched to fee-based higher education for non-EU students with only a few are still committed to no-tuition fees for non-EU students. In the end, the economic potential of charging international students for higher education has been recognized by most of the European countries, and this is the time to exploit their educational “products” in the international market (Healey, 2008). This education “product”, according to World Trade Organization (WTO), belongs to service category, which is legally regulated by the “General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)”. In order to study the internationalization of higher education from a business perspective, it is necessary to study GATS, which is the first and the only “set of multilateral rules covering international trade in services” up to today (Varoglu, 2002; WTO, 2015).

2.2.1 Introduction of GATS and its Implication on Higher Education

General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) was initiated by WTO and came into force in 1995. In principal, GATS covers all the services sectors, including “business and professional services, communication services, construction and related services, distribution services, education services, energy services, environmental services, financial services, health and social services, tourism services, and transport services (WTO, 2015). However, two types of services are not under the regulation of GATS, which are “services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority” and the “air transportation services” (WTO, 2015). All WTO members follow a progressive process in liberalizing the trade in services, which means that all member nations can independently decide on which service sector and to what degree that they want to commit. There are two main types of commitments: General Obligations and Specific Commitments. In general obligations, one important rule is most-favored-nation (MFN), which requires the Member nation to give “equal and consistent treatment” to all foreign services suppliers (Varoglu, 2002). Specific commitments are usually built on negotiations, and normally it covers Market Access and National Treatment: the market access commitment allows foreign suppliers to access the domestic market to a certain degree with some limitations; and the national treatment requires the member nation to treat the foreign and local suppliers equally (WTO, n.d.).

According to GATS specification, in terms of the supply of the services, there are four modes that services can be traded internationally:

“Mode 1: Cross-border Supply, which “means services flows from the territory of one Member into the territory of another Member”.

Mode 2: Consumption Abroad, which “refers to situations where a service consumer moves into another Member’s territory to obtain a service”.

Mode 3: Commercial Presence, which “implies that a service supplier of one Member establishes a territorial presence, including through ownership or lease of premises, in another Member’s territory to provide a service”.

Mode 4: Presence of Natural Persons, which “consists of persons of one Member entering the territory of another Member to supply a service”. (WTO, n.d.)

Higher education is an important part of the education service regulated by GATS, and in terms of the four modes of service trade, educational activities related to higher education service can be categorized into four modes as well (Knight, 2002).

- 1) Cross-border Supply: distance education; e-learning; virtual universities.
- 2) Consumption Abroad: students/scholars who go to another country to study.
- 3) Commercial Presence: local branch or satellite campuses; twinning partnerships; franchising arrangements with local institutions.
- 4) Presence of Natural Persons: professors, teachers, researchers working abroad.

Despite the rosy goal of GATS in liberalizing the service trade, education service remains to be one of the least committed sector under GATS (Varoglu, 2002; deWTO, 2015). There are a few reasons for this, but the fundamental reason might be the “bottom-up nature” of GATS, which gives each member country freedom to decide “if, how, when and under what conditions” that they would want to make a commitment (Knight, 2006). Another reason is linked to the fact that usually countries are concerned that the liberalization of higher education would affect government’s role in regulating the higher education sector to achieve their social objectives (Larsen, Martin, Morris, 2002). Knight (2002) also pointed out that some nations are probably looking for a way to balance the domestic higher education development and the exploration on higher education liberalization, which is common mostly among developing countries (Knight, 2002; Bashir, 2007). The last underlying reason may be due to the political trade-off. Education service sector is still at a low status when governments negotiate agreements: some countries may trade the market access to domestic education sector for the market access of other sector in the trading country (Knight, 2002; Knight, 2006).

At the same time, the contentious debate on the public nature of higher education has never really stopped. According to GATS, “public good/service” should be excluded from the discussion of GATS, thus for many educators, especially these from the continental Europe, they still see higher education as a “public good”, and the discussion of higher education trade under GATS is inappropriate (Van der Wande, 2003). Also some believe that the education trade will “commercialize education”, which will negatively affect people’s equal access to education (Knight, 2002; Bashir, 2007). However, in a complicated education system, where public providers and private providers coexist, it is very hard to say that

education service as a whole should be totally excluded (Larsen, Martin, Morris, 2002). Bashir (2007) also pointed out that there is a “visible shift to market-based higher education in almost all countries”, and we need to come up with new ways to “promote the public good nature of higher education”.

In the end, even though GATS was the first one to initiate international negotiations on service trade, “most countries have no commitments”, and “the commitments and rules were developed in the late 1980s”, which may no longer apply in today’s reality (Lester, 2013). Barrett (2015) believed that the limitations of GATS requires that other types of negotiations should be explored. Currently, there are three other main ways of promoting the education service trade through 1) new regional, multilateral, and bilateral agreements, for example the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement; 2) inter-governmental organizations/agencies, for example Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); 3) professional organizations to promote international professional recognition, for example the International Union of Architects (Crosier and Parveva, 2013; Australian Government, 2016; Jaramillo and Knight, n.d.; Nielson, n.d.).

2.2.3 General Barriers/Challenges to International Education Service Trade

As a result of the “internationalization of higher education”, international education service trade faces the same challenges mentioned in part 2.1.3. But due to the tradable nature of education service, it faces more barriers: joint declaration against trade liberalization in higher education (Der Wende, 2003), insufficient emphasis on research (Knight, 2002a), governments’ unwillingness to liberalize education trade (Barrett, 2015), and specific trade barriers in terms of trade mode (Knight, 2002).

2.2.4 Future Trends in International Trade in Higher Education

Despite all these challenges, the international trade in higher education will keep growing rapidly worldwide (Newman and Couturier, 2002; Bashir, 2007). Bashir (2007) believed that the commercial-oriented education service would have an impact on changing the domestic education system, and Newman and Couturier (2002) shared the same idea as they

pointed out that policy makers may tend to use “market forces” as a way to push the domestic education reform forward. According to Newman and Couturier (2002), Knight (2002) and Bashir (2007), there are other noticeable trends that can be found in higher education service trade. First, the number of students enrolled in higher education will keep growing, and various education arrangements, for example twinning programs and off-shore campuses, are expanding their reach to extended foreign markets. Second, the tuition fees and other costs related to studies are on the rise, no matter whether the education providers are public or private. Third, the development in ICT will help educational providers to build its global network through virtual education and long-distance education. Lastly, the competition in higher education service trade is getting more and more intense since more providers are joining the international market. Among all the newcomers, Finland, as one of the OECD countries, has shown its ambition in becoming one of the leading players in the international market, and in the next section, we are going to take a close look at what Finland has done to meet that ambition.

2.3 Export of Finnish Higher Education

2.3.1 Internationalization of Higher Education in Finland

Today, Finnish higher education is mostly provided by 14 universities and 24 polytechnics (StudyinFinland.fi, 2017). The internationalization of Finnish higher education started in the 1980s, but it was very limited compared with its Nordic neighbors (Nokkala, 2007). It was only until 1995, the full development of being internationalized has finally been recognized by the national government, and “internationalization had become everyday business in education policy” (Maassen and Nokkala, 2004; Nokkala, 2007). After joining the Bologna process, Finland has finally adopted the “two-tier degree system” and “ECTS-based credit system” in 2005 with four main objectives as “comparable and easily readable degree structures and a coherent system of credits”, “promotion of mobility and the European dimension in higher education”, “improving the quality of higher education and quality assurance”, and “lifelong learning and the social dimension of higher education” (Objectives of the Bologna Process and Finland, 2013, table).

In 2009, the Finnish Ministry of Education launched a “*Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015*” with five primary goals: 1) to create “a genuinely international higher education community” by building international networks and offering courses in foreign languages; 2) to increase “the quality and attractiveness of higher education institutions”; 3) to promote “the export of expertise” by recognizing “higher education and expertise are nationally significant exports”; 4) to support “multicultural society” by valuing the foreign background of the immigrants, international students and scholars; and 5) to promote “global responsibility” (MOE, 2009). According to Saarinen (2012), this is the latest national guiding document on internationalization strategy. Meanwhile, instead of discussing internationalization, the topic of “Finnish higher education export” is actually getting more and more popular among the political and academic sectors since Finland’s success in PISA test.

2.3.2 The Finnish Education Export

As mentioned previously in the internationalization of Finnish higher education section, Finnish education export started to become a popular topic after the success in PISA test. Despite the fact that PISA success is more directly related to Finnish basic education, Finland has tried to utilize the good reputation brought by PISA to promote the export of its education in general (Schatz, 2015). In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Culture published “*Finnish Education Export Strategy*” aiming at promoting the Finnish education export. Even though the government admitted that “no ready-made (education) product exist, or none have at least been identified yet” and “limited resources and current legislations” have put challenges for Finland to export its education, the Finnish government still strongly believed that Finnish education export will grow significantly by 2015 (MOEC, 2010). However, this strategy tool book offered no clear information on “how to export, what to export, and to whom” (Schatz, 16a), so the obvious question is what exactly does the export of the Finnish education refer to?

In general, Adams (2007) defined education export as “an educational services approach based on a public-private partnership with market-driven services that may provide a surplus to the institution, high quality educational and pastoral services to students, and export income to the nation, within a strong national regulatory framework”. However, the

education export under Finnish context is a bit different. Although there is no formal definition from Finnish governmental documents, by interpreting the documents from Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Schatz (2016a) proposed a definition of Finnish education export as “an international business transaction concerning educational services, practices, expertise and materials between countries”. In another related study, she further pointed out that Finnish education export includes: “1) selling educational equipment to other countries; 2) selling educational knowledge to other countries; 3) selling Finnish Education know-how/programs/degrees to other countries” (Schatz, 2016b). One important fact regarding the “education” of “Finnish education export” is that it is a very general concept comprising education at different levels and from different providers across the education industry (Schatz, 2015). Since this thesis topic focuses on class teacher education, which belongs to the sector of higher education, the following discussion will be confined to Finnish higher education.

2.3.2 Current Situation of Finnish Higher Education Export

The Finnish higher education export seems to be a promising sector, and a long list of strengths and opportunities can be identified: the global international education market has been growing rapidly; there is a growing need of higher education from developing countries; Finland enjoys a good reputation in its education system and its good education quality; Finnish higher education institutes have established some international networks; Finnish higher education institutes offer various English programs; specialized governmental organizations have been set up to support the education export, such as Future Learning Finland and Team Finland (MOEC, 2010; El Cheikh, 2015). This list can keep going, but it will not change the fact that Finland is still far from achieving the goal of being the “world’s leading education-based economy” (MOEC, 2010). In 2013, another working group set up by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture found out that “previous education export activities did not meet expectation and failed to create a flourishing Finnish Education export sector” (Schatz, 2016a).

Cai, Hölttä and Kivistö (2012) organized a set of interviews with relevant informants from Finnish higher education institutions and governmental organizations to understand whether the Finnish higher education institutes are really ready for education exporting, and they

(2012) have identified several key challenges. Various studies of Schatz (2015, 2016a, 2016b) have also listed the challenges for promoting the Finnish higher education export. In El Cheikh's (2015) master thesis, he also listed several challenges/obstacles for Finnish Higher education export through his interviews with Finnish higher education institutions, companies, and government departments. These major challenges can be summarized as following:

- 1) There is ***no existing education product*** ready to be sold in the international market. Different organizations understand differently about what an education product is.
- 2) ***Lack of motivation and involvement***. The commitment level among higher education institutions are varied. The importance of education export is conceived differently among the stakeholders.
- 3) ***Good reputation of Finnish education only lies in basic education*** rather than its higher education. The plan of capitalizing the PISA success in promoting the whole education sector may not work.
- 4) ***Lack of coordination between institutions***. There is no central organization to coordinate the education export activities between different higher education institutions and private providers, which brings chaos when Finnish higher education institutes or companies enter the international market as they are creating different image of Finnish higher education. Some national organizations are aiming at improving this situation, but so far their work is limited with sharing contacts rather than actual coordination.
- 5) ***National policy*** in promoting the education export ***has not been very clear*** about the guideline and on how exactly the government can support the higher education institutions.
- 6) ***Who is in charge?*** The Finnish government asks the higher education institutions to take the full responsibility of its education export activities, however, most of the institutions lack the resources (finance, knowledge, etc) in organizing marketing and sales, thus a collective effort should be done by the government or governmental organizations.
- 7) ***Intensified competition*** in international education market. Compared with other OECD countries, Finland has been a "latecomer" in international education market while other major education export countries have already established

their positions in the markets of developing countries. Besides, the country image of Finland is relatively weaker compared to other major players, such as UK, Australia, and Japan.

- 8) Host country *trade barriers*, as mentioned in the education service trade section. Trade barriers do not affect the international students coming to study in Finland, but it does affect how Finnish higher education providers can provide education across national borders.

2.3.4 What's Next?

The current challenges are calling for strategies for the next move in order to meet goal of exporting Finnish higher education. Schatz (2015, 2016b) and El Cheikh (2015) have offered their ideas, but they are all in line with what Cai, Hölttä, and Kivistö's (2012) have already recommended. According to them (2012), Finland can start with their next steps in the following three aspects:

Direction 1: Legislation support. Finnish government should adapt laws or regulations related to the business oriented activities of higher education export. The change of the law to introduce the tuition fee for non-EU students is one of the first steps.

Direction 2: Active learning and sharing. Finnish higher education institutions can increase its competitive competence internationally by learning better about the target markets and customers either through research, working with foreign experienced institutions or local agencies or internally sharing the successful experience in international education activities.

Direction 3: Collective effort. There should be a national coordination of all the international/export activities of higher education institutions, companies, organizations, and legislative departments to create a unified brand image of Finnish higher education for the international market and to utilize the resources by providing common supports in legal, assessment, marketing, sales, etc.

These suggestions may help the Finnish higher education providers to get prepared for education export, but when we talk about "Finnish higher education export", one of the most

important factors is the education product/service. There are various education products under the context of Finnish education export (Schatz, 2016b), and many scholars have pointed out that excellent teachers and teachers' education are the key assets of Finnish education (Simola, 2005; Sahlberg, 2011a), but will the class teacher education, especially class teacher education, be a competitive product in the international market?

2.4 Export Product – Class Teachers' Education in Finland

“We don’t need inspections or ranking list – in teachers we trust!”

-- FTTS (Finnish Teacher Training Schools, website)

According to the Finnish PISA team, Finnish PISA success is attributed to “a whole network of interrelated factors, in which students’ own areas of interest and leisure activities, the learning opportunities provided by schools, parental support and involvement as well as the social and cultural context of learning and the entire education system combine with each other” (Väljärvi et al., 2002). However, many scholars and public discussions have referred the “excellent teachers and teacher education” as the main reasons for Finnish PISA success (Simola, 2005). So what is the magic of Finnish teacher education that has made this argument so convincing?

Over half century ago, in the 1960s, the education level of Finland was still far behind its Nordic neighbours of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and it was at the similar level of Malaysia and Peru (Sahlberg, 2010). Today, Finland is regarded as “one of the most well-educated countries” among the OECD countries where “84% of 25-64 years old have at least completed upper secondary education” (OECD average of 75%) and “39% hold a tertiary degree (OECD average 32%)” (OECD, 2013). Just as what Sahlberg (2010) pointed out, “without excellent teachers, Finland’s current international success would have been impossible”. In Finland, teachers’ work is “appreciated and respected” by the public, and teachers enjoy a very good social status as teaching is regarded as a “noble and prestigious profession” by Finns (Simola, 2005; Sahlberg, 2010). Finnish teachers are usually very

committed to their teaching job, and only about 10-15% of Finnish teachers thought about changing their career (Ostinelli, 2009). Teacher education programs, especially class teacher for primary schools, is one of the most popular programs among young Finns (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.), and they choose teacher education for “social prestige, professional autonomy in schools, and ethos of teaching as a service to society and the public good” rather than just for salaries (Sahlberg, 2010).

2.4.1 Overview of Teacher Education in Finland

In Finland, teachers’ education started over hundreds of years ago, but it was developing slowly until a few decades ago. In 2005, along with the Bologna Process, Finland has moved to a two-tier degree system. Primary and secondary school teachers are required to acquire a three-years Bachelor’s degree and a two-years Master’s degree. Today, teacher education is carried out in eight Finnish comprehensive universities in eleven campuses across Finland to guarantee “educational equality” among different areas (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). Three types of teachers: classroom/class teachers, subject teachers, and special teachers - are trained for Finnish comprehensive schools: Class teachers are trained for primary schools, and usually they teach all subjects and guide “the whole development of the pupils”; Subject teachers are trained for both primary schools and secondary schools to teach one or two specific subjects; and the education of special teachers is focusing on supporting the learning of students with special needs (Kansanen, n.d.).

It is very difficult to get enrolled in a teacher education program, and only the best students are selected. Nowadays the universities recruit the new student teachers by following a two-step process: first, the students have to take a national test called VAKAVA (National Educational Selection Cooperation Project); once the student passes the test, he or she will be invited to an interview. the second step, where his/her aptitude to the teacher profession, motivation, and interaction skills will be evaluated by a group of professionals from teacher education department, teacher training schools and other schools (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.; Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). In this interview session, there is no common scoring system adopted, but each university has developed their own system of evaluation (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). Usually, less than 25% of these

applicants will be admitted to various teacher education programs, and for class teacher program, the admission rate is only 10-15% (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.).

2.4.2 Program Structure – Class Teachers

There are no nationally unified design of teacher education program curricula for teacher education, though there is a national regulation on “contents, objectives and minimum credits” for teacher education departments (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012): each university has their own autonomy in planning their program curriculum based on their own resources (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.). But teacher education departments in different universities do have “a detailed and often binding strategy for improving the quality of its teacher education programs” (Sahlberg, 2010). In general, the main study focuses on three content areas: “the theory of education, pedagogical content knowledge, and subject didactics and practice” (Kansanen, n.d.). Since my thesis topic is tightly linked to class teacher education, so here we only focus on the class teacher education program.

The class teacher education programs in different universities are very similar (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012), and the main structure of the class teacher program usually follows the structure as presented in the following Table 2 on the next page (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006 cited in Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.). Based on this table, the pedagogical studies and subject-matter studies take about 20% of the total study hours respectively, and research-based studies (concentrated in bachelor’s and master’s theses) comprise almost 27% of the total credits. Also, depends on the minor studies, students can gain extra degree in subject teacher or special-needs teacher.

Table 2. Class Teacher Education Program in Finland

(Note: Reprinted from Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006 cited in Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.)

Primary School Teacher Education Program		Bachelor's Degree (180 ECTS)	Master's Degree (120 ECTS)	Total (300 ECTS)
Class teachers' Pedagogical Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Basics of teaching methods and evaluationSupport of different kinds of learnersLatest research results and research methods of teaching and learningCooperation with different partners and stakeholders	25 (including supervised teaching practice)	35 (including a minimum of 15 ECTS supervised teaching practice)	60
Other Studies in a major in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research methodsScientific writingOptional Studies	35 (including BA thesis)	45 (including MA thesis)	80
Subject matter studies for Comprehensive school teachers		60		60
Academic Studies in a different discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A minor	25	0 – 35	25 – 60
Language and Communication Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Practice in working lifePreparation and updating a personal study planOptional Studies	35	5 – 40	40 – 75

2.4.3 Teaching Practice

All the student teachers in Finland have to take teaching practices during their study. Usually each university has one or two teacher training schools to undertake the teaching practices, and sometimes normal public schools can offer the training opportunity as well (Sahlberg, 2010). The teaching practice is integrated into the study throughout the whole education program with a purpose of connecting the theories and practices (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.), and it is guided and supported by supervisors with regular feedback (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). For example, the teacher training in the

University of Eastern Finland consists of four modules through a progressive approach (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012):

- Module 1 aims at “orientating the student teachers to observe school life, teachers’ work and the pupils from the perspective of education and educational psychology”;
- Module 2 and 3 focus on “teaching of specific subject areas and guiding and evaluating of pupils’ learning process”;
- Module 4 supports “student teacher to take a more holistic responsibility and to widen their perspective to the entire school community and beyond it”.

However, the teaching practice has also received doubt as there is a mismatch between the trainings and actual school activities of teachers (Hansén, 1997 cited in Westbury et al., 2005).

2.4.4 Research-based Teacher’s Education

Finland has changed towards a research-oriented or research-based teacher education since 1979 when teacher education became part of the university system, and it was reinforced in 2005 with the Bologna process of two-tier degree system (Hansén, Eklund, and Sjöberg, 2015). Sahlberg (2010) defined the research-based approach as Finland’s commitment in integrating “educational theories, research methodologies and practices” in teacher preparation programs, which is similar to the definition given by Kansanen (n.d.) who sees this approach as an “reciprocal interaction” between “the theory of education, pedagogical content knowledge, and subject didactics and practice” throughout the education program. The research-based education is mostly presented in the learning of scientific methodologies and the use of them in writing of Master’s thesis (Ostinelli, 2009; Hansén, Eklund, and Sjöberg, 2015).

According to Toom (et al., 2010), the goal of research-based approach in teacher education is to help teachers to “acquire an inquiring attitude to teaching” and to “have the capacity to use research and research-derived competencies in their ongoing teaching and decision-making”. As the most credited and critical figure of Finnish teacher education, research-based approach was regarded at “the heart of Finnish teacher education” (Westbury et al., 2005), and Toom (et al., 2010) also attributed the good teaching in Finnish schools to this

research-based approach. However, research-based education may not fulfill its full purpose as it seems to be, and several studies on the student teachers have posed questions on this approach. One question is “whether this approach and focus during teacher education has a lasting effect on teacher’s way of thinking and acting in their work” (Hansén et al., 2011)? And studies revealed that this actually largely depends on the “individual teacher’s capacity” (Hansén et al., 2011). Another question lies in how the student teachers perceive the research-based approach? One study on the student teachers and teacher educators in University of Helsinki between 2005 and 2007 showed that they mostly related this approach to “research articles” rather than to the practical teaching content and methods in primary schools (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). Eklund (2015) agreed with this viewpoint by pointing out that “students do understand the importance of research-based orientation, but they have difficulty in seeing the relation to the practical teacher profession”, and she further suggested to incorporate more “projects and development works in schools and classrooms as well as action research” to help students to combine the theory and practice during the preparation education (Eklund, 2015; Hansén, Eklund, and Sjöberg, 2015).

2.4.5 Underlying Challenges of Finnish Teacher Education

Even though the Finnish teacher education has been set as a role model for the world after the PISA success, there are still several challenges regarding the Finnish teacher education, which have attracted scholars’ attention.

The first challenge lies in the ongoing or lifelong education of teachers. Teacher education in Finland can be generally divided into pre-service education and in-service education (Ostinelli, 2009), and the pre-service education programs “seem to function very well” (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.), however there is no “systematic in-service teacher education” (Kansanen, n.d.; Sahlberg, 2010). Usually the in-service teacher education is financed by the municipalities, but the decision on what kind and how much of in-service education should be provided are decided differently: in some cases, the municipality takes control of implementing uniform in-service training; while in some other cases, each school or teacher decides which training program they need. Lack of national coordination in in-service teacher education is undermining Finland’s pursue in lifelong learning (Ostinelli,

2009), which will also bring in the inequality in the teachers' professional development and school development (Sahlberg, 2010). Thus a national level of in-service teacher education is in great need (Kansanen, n.d.).

The second challenge is how Finland can prepare its teachers for the *changing society*. Finland has been a relatively homogeneous society compared to countries like Germany and Sweden, and this homogeneity has helped to “unify and harmonize” the student group taught by class teachers (Simola, 2005). However, with increasing number of incoming immigrants, teachers have to pay more attention to “moral dimension of their work” (Tirri, 2014). There is an increasing need for preparing the teachers to “understand different cultures, religions and values... in a more heterogeneous Finland” (Toom et al., 2010)

The last challenge is more closely linked to my thesis topic as whether Finnish teacher education can be transmitted to another country. Despite the fact that many educators criticized that PISA test did not reflect the school learning and overall development of a student, there are still some people see this as an opportunity of promoting the Finnish education business by “transmitting Finnish education policies and practices” to other nations (Sahlberg, 2011b; Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012). Clearly the literatures discussed in the previous sections showed that there are many good practices that others can learn from, at least, the Finnish teacher education system, especially the pre-service education in comprehensive universities, but we should also bear in mind that “simply modeling Finnish practices in some other cultural and geographic contexts would NOT automatically result in high ranking in school system league tables” (Malinen, Väisänen, and Savolainen, 2012), and we need to learn from Finland by firstly understanding the “social-cultural, political and economic” differences (Sahlberg, 2010), which leads to the study of the teacher education in China in the next section.

2.5 Foreign Market – Class Teacher’s Education in China

“Teachers should have a healthy body, farmers’ skills, a scientific mind, interests in arts, and the passion for social reforms.”

--- Mr. Tao Xingzhi (well-known Chinese educator)

2.5.1 Overview of Teachers' Education in China

Starting with the establishment of Nanyang Public School in Shanghai in 1897, teacher education in China has been developing for over a hundred years on a tortuous path (Gu, 2003). The teacher's education used to be in a closed system as teacher students study in specialized schools (Ji, 2007). Gradually following the international trend of increasing the academic preparation in teacher education (Gu, 2003) and fulfilling the needs of national development (Zhou and Reed, 2005), some ordinary universities joined the teacher education system, while at the same time, some normal colleges/universities were transformed into comprehensive colleges/universities with non-educational subjects (Zhu and Han, 2006). Thus, teacher education has changed into an open system, which consists of various educational providers at different levels (Zhu and Han, 2006).

In the last two decades, teacher education in China has shifted from solving the problem of lack of teachers to improving teachers' quality, which is also referred as "teachers' professional development" (Zhou and Reed, 2005; Shi and Englert, 2008). In 2001, "normal education" was replaced by "teacher education" in national government document for the first time (Zhong and Wang, 2012), which is not merely a change of concept, but a structural change of the teacher education system (Pan and Wu, 2004). This new change requires the teachers' education sector to become a more open system with focuses on professional development and life-long learning throughout the teaching career (Zhong and Wang, 2012).

However, the promotion of the professional development of teacher education is facing several realistic challenges: i) diverse teacher education system has made it difficult to guarantee teachers' quality from various institutions of different levels (Zhong and Wang, 2012); ii) pedagogical studies are not receiving enough attention as they only make up less than 10% of the total studies (Zhou, Tang, and Gong, 2011); iii) teaching practices are not enough during the pre-service education, which negatively affect how student teachers can connect theories with practices (Zhou, Tang, and Gong, 2011); iii) in-service training remains a big challenge for life-long learning as teachers' in-service training is usually organized in a top-down manner, as the national government set the regulations and local educational department decide the funding and training programs (He, 2014), but the real

needs of teachers' professional development are not considered in the design of training programs (Xiong, 2012).

2.5.2 Teacher Education for Rural Areas

Despite the above challenges, the general situation of teacher education in China has been reforming and improving along with the economic development in the past few decades. However, teacher education for rural areas is becoming a more acute social problem. This problem is deeply rooted in the Chinese dual social structure of city and country (Zhang, 2003; Bao, 2005; Yang and Liu, 2015). In the past few decades, the developments of urban areas and rural areas are adopting two separate paths due to the economic and social difference in urban and rural areas, and the same rule (national guideline of “*The Decisions on Several Issues of Popularizing Primary School Education*” in 1980) was applied in basic education as the city government and country government take responsibility of the basic education respectively (Zhang, 2003; Bao, 2005). Though this arrangement was supposed to adapt the education to better meet the local needs, it actually violated the “public nature” of basic education, which in fact, further broadened the education gap between city and countryside (Zhang, 2003). At the same time, with rapid economic and social development since the Chinese Reform and Opening-up in 1978, the urbanization process has been accelerated: by 2015, the urbanization rate is 56.1% (NBSC, 2016), which marked an on-going trend of rural-urban immigration within China. This internal immigration has led to the continuous drop in rural population and extinction of villages, which posed severe challenges to the education development in rural areas (21CEDU, 2013): there are not enough funding and resources for rural basic education; the income level and living condition of teachers are low in rural areas, thus good teachers are not willing to work in rural areas; the education quality in rural areas is much lower compared with urban schools, and many students go to the city or town for better education (Wang, 2013).

In the last decade, education in rural areas has received much more attention. In 2006, the Central Committee of the Communist Part of China passed “*The Decision of a number of Major Issues on Building the Harmonious Socialist Society*”, in which “promoting education equality” was clearly stated as one of the major aims, and the main content of education equality focuses on rural education (Xinhuanet, 2006). In 2010, the Ministry of Education

of PRC published the “*Outline of the National Program for Medium and Long-term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)*”, in which rural education was stressed again. Since the enactment of this document, various programs have been created to improve the equality and quality of education in rural China (21CEDU, 2013), and one of the approaches is training good teachers for the rural areas.

Free Teacher Education Program (FTE). In 2007, Chinese government launched the “Free Teacher Education Program”, which aimed at training prospective young teachers in top normal universities for those underdeveloped rural areas. These selected teacher students do not need to pay for tuition or accommodation fees and receive monthly subsidies in exchange of (at least) two-year service in rural areas. However according to Yang and Wang (2007), the FTE program is more attractive to those students who have financial difficulties rather than talented students. And for those who originally came from rural areas, they did not want to go back to underdeveloped areas as they perceive good education as a way to move up social status (Yang and Wang, 2007).

National Training Plan. In 2010, the Chinese national government launched the “*National Training Plan for Middle and Primary School Teachers*”. This plan aims at improving the quality and equality of basic education by training in-service teachers in primary and middle schools especially these in rural areas, and each province and city have their autonomy in deciding and operating suitable training programs (MOE of PRC, 2009). Despite the ambitious goal and huge investments (550 million CNY in 2010), many training programs were not properly designed to meet the real needs of teachers’ professional development (Ye, 2011).

Meanwhile, there are many other projects designed for supporting rural education. But the reality of reduced students’ number and lack of subject teachers in rural areas have created a common phenomenon called “Bao Ban Zhi”, which means that one teacher takes care of the class management and the teaching of all subjects (Ding, 2016). However, most of the teachers who take “Bao Ban Zhi” were not trained to teach different subjects. Ding (2016) suggested that government can support this “Bao Ban Zhi” by training the current in-service teachers or by preparing new cohort of “Bao Ban Teachers” in higher institutions, which is also known as “class teachers”.

2.5.3 Exploration on Class Teacher Education

In 2012, Ministry of Education published “Suggestions on Promoting the Development of Teachers’ Team for Overall-quality Education in Rural Areas”. This document marked the transition from subject-based teacher education towards class teacher education for primary schools. In 2014, Ministry of Education published another guiding document of “*Suggestions on Implementing the Plan of Training Outstanding Teachers*” with various experimental projects. Among these twenty piloting projects listed in this document, more than half of these projects are about “training class teachers for primary schools”. This document has clearly set “class teacher education” as the future goal for higher educational institutions (Wang and Zheng, 2016).

Recently, training class teacher is seen as a popular remedy that can solve many of the problems of primary education in rural areas (Jiang, 2016). According to Zhang and Xiao (2015), class teacher education for rural areas can help to improve the overall competencies of teachers’ team in remote areas, it can also help to solve the problem of the shortage of subject teachers, and the focus of “rural values” will better meet the local needs. However, Jiang (2016) believed that class teacher education is just an adaption of existing “Bao Ban Zhi”. Liu (2016) also argued that this orientation to train class teachers for rural areas is a “helpless” solution that simply “ignores students’ rights to access high-quality education in rural areas”. Their arguments are definitely not groundless as the class teacher education is still at its infancy stage in China, and many improvements have to be done before it can achieve its expected results. By reviewing related articles, there are three major improvements that can be done:

1. **Curriculum Design.** Jiang (2016) pointed out that the curriculum for class teachers in China is simply an addition of different subject studies, which is built on the traditional subject teacher training. For class teacher education, it has to break down the “walls” between different disciplines and to integrate the knowledge within and between disciplines (Wang and Zheng, 2016). Wang and Zheng (2016) also suggested that more liberal education is needed to build a humanistic mindset for those class student teachers. Yu (2016) added that the pedagogical studies are not

enough in the current class teacher education. According to Yang (2014), the pedagogical studies only take 9% of the total study.

2. ***Teaching Practices.*** In general, the class teacher education is mostly based on lecturing theories with inadequate opportunities to try the theories out in real classrooms (Liu, 2016). In reality, teaching practices are very limited as in-service teachers worry that the practices will disturb the class management, pupils' parents object the practices as they think it affect their kids' studies, and the local government is not forcing enough the implementation of teaching practices (Yu, 2016). Yu (2016) suggested that universities should work together with the primary schools to solve some of their practical problems to win trust from the schools. Wang and Zheng (2016) also suggested that university professors should get involved in the real teaching activities in primary schools to better prepare their students for in-school practices. At the same time, excellent in-service teachers should also be invited to give lectures in universities to help the student teachers to understand the real classroom context (Wang and Zheng, 2016).
3. ***Commitment to rural education.*** Compared to cities, rural areas are not so attractive to young graduates. Class teacher education for rural areas has to meet the challenge of how to make these young class teachers be committed to basic education in rural areas (Xiao, 2014). The pre-service education need to prepare the students' mind of having a passion of serving in rural areas, improving the basic education in rural areas, and helping to build a new socialist countryside (Xiao, 2014; Zhang and Xiao, 2015).

Many articles talk about how to improve the class teacher education for rural areas, but I find the "GPS" model proposed by Jiang (2016) the most holistic suggestion. In Jiang's model (figure below), "GPS" requires the class teacher students to have general, professional, and subject abilities in order to carry out the class teaching in primary schools.

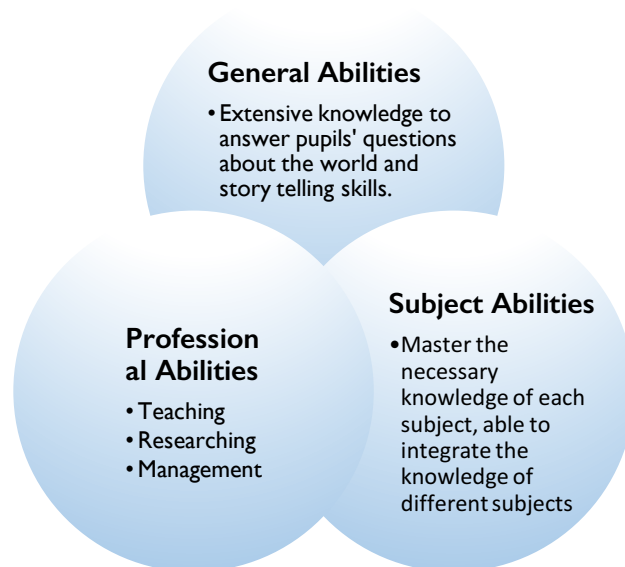


Figure 2. "GPS" Model

By comparing this model with Finnish class teacher education curricular in the previous subsection, the whole set of studies (the theory of education, pedagogical studies, subject didactics and practices (Kansanen, n.d.)) with a research-based approach in Finnish teacher education perfectly meet all the requirements of the “GPS” model. There is a huge potential that the experience in Finnish class teacher education can be used to improve the class teacher education programs in China.

2.6 Foreign Market Entry Strategies

Foreign market entry strategy is the bridge that links the Finnish “export product” with the “foreign market”, so in this section, articles and major theories about entry strategies will be studied.

2.6.1 Entry Mode Strategies

“An entry mode is an institutional arrangement that a firm uses to market its product, technology, human skills, management or other resources in a foreign market” (Root 1994 cited in Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004). The early studies on entry modes focused on

manufacturing industries, and the most common entry modes were identified in the 1990s (Hill, Hwang, and Kim, 1990; Erramilli, 1990; Kim and Hwang, 1992; Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 1998) as:

- Exporting
- Licensing/Franchising
- Joint Venture
- Sole Ownership/Venture

By looking from a foreign direct investment perspective, another two types of entry modes have been examined by several scholars (Gilroy and Lukas, 2006; Slangen and Hennart, 2007): Mergers and Acquisition (M&A) and Greenfield Investment. Greenfield investment means that a firm builds up its foreign subsidiary from scratch, and it can be in a form of wholly owned subsidiary or joint venture with a partner. While M&A refers to the activities of “purchasing” an existing venture either partially or wholly (Slangen and Hennart, 2007).

According to Gilroy and Lukas (2006), the entry mode strategy “serve as a platform allowing the firm to make subsequent investment to exploit host-country advantages and capabilities”. And the choice of the entry mode is one of the key decisions if a firm wants to achieve successful international operations (Erramilli, 1990; Hill, Hwang, and Kim, 1990; Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004). The decision on foreign market entry strategy is based on various factors, and scholars have tried to analyze these factors from different perspectives, and some major theories were built along these studies.

Theory 1: Eclectic Theory Perspective. Eclectic theory was proposed and developed by Dunning, who developed a model to explain companies’ foreign direct investment activities based on three variables: ownership advantage, location advantage, and internalization advantage (Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004). Ownership advantage refers to the “superior assets or skills (usually the firm size, multinational experience, ability to develop differentiated products)” that firms can compete with the local competitors; Location advantage means that a firm choose an attractive market based on the “market potential (size and growth)” and “investment risk”; and internalization advantage is gained when firms are able to internalization of its

international operations to avoid “contractual risk” (Agarwal and Ramaswami, 1992). However, according to Buckley and Casson (1998), the eclectic theory can be served as a framework rather than a model since it cannot “provide detailed advice on research design and hypothesis testing”.

Theory 2: Transaction Cost (TC) Theory Perspective. TC theory was firstly introduced by Andersen & Gatignon in 1986a, and it has been used to explain why a firm would prefer a FDI approach over exporting or licensing/franchising modes. When the transaction cost is higher, companies would try to avoid or to reduce this cost by internalizing these costs (Hill, Hwang and Kim, 1990; Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004; Slangen and Hennart, 2007). Later some scholars introduced other variables to “modify” the TC theory to explain the choice between different entry modes, for example, Slangen and Hennart (2007) extended this theory to examine the choice between greenfield investment and acquisition, explaining that companies lacking certain specific knowledge would choose acquisition over greenfield investment. But despite its popularity in internationalization literature, TC theory has its own limitations as it fails to take other related variables into account and its fundamental theoretical base on “market failure” is losing the stance in the globalized market (Andersen, Ahmad and Chan, 2014).

Theory 3: Resource-based Theory. This theory started from the mid-1980s as a “resource-based view” study, which explains that firm gets its competitive advantage through its own set of “firm-specific resources” (Sharma and Erramilli, 2004; Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004). These resources can be tangible assets in finance and human resource, and they can also be intangible assets such as brand name and experience (Andersen, Ahmad, and Chan, 2014). The study of Sharma and Erramilli (2004) showed that this RBV perspective from the firm’s “resource endowment and deployment” can explain the firm’s international operations in production, marketing and entry mode. Meanwhile, Ekeledo and Sivakumar (2004) also emphasized that compared with the previous two theories, resource-based theory does not just focus on FDI but with a broader application in other entry modes. They (2004) pointed out that “the resource-based theory has good explanatory abilities for entry mode strategies”. But this theory has also received criticism from other scholars: some think that this theory model is static rather than dynamic, some think that the

measurement of each resource's contribution is not so clear, and some believe that a firm's capabilities should be taken into consideration (Andersen, Ahmad, and Chan, 2014).

Theory 4: Contingency Theory. Different from the previous theories, the contingency theory has taken a perspective from the “decision maker” on how the choice of entry mode is decided (Andersen, Ahmad, and Chan, 2014). According to Kumar and Velavan (1997), “the choice of a decision strategy is contingent upon the characteristic of the decision maker and the characteristics of the decision task... dependent on the manager's prior expectation of the quality of information he/she obtain.” Built on the Eclectic model, Ekeledo and Sivakumar (1998) suggested their version of contingency model by taking four factors (internal environment, product classification, external environment, and level of production & involvement) into consideration. Gao (2004) summarized previous literature on the contingency model, and proposed to incorporate “non-equity involvement, such as trust and bargaining power” into the contingency model. Even though the contingency model listed a comprehensive set of variable, it did not have a clear set of definitions of these variables and their corresponding measurements, and this model required extensive information on related factors from these firms (Andersen, Ahmad, and Chan, 2014).

However, the above major theories were started and developed by studying the manufacturing industries, whether the same theoretical modes can be applied to the service industry remains unclear.

2.6.2 Foreign Market Entry Strategy for Service Firms

Different from the manufacturing goods, service has its own distinctive attributes: 1) intangibility, which means it is not a physical object that can be touched; 2) inseparability, which means that the service production and consumption are happening at the same time; 3) heterogeneity, which means that the service quality or performance would be varied between different producers; 4) perishability, which means that service cannot be stored (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1985). However, scholars have realized that these attributes won't apply to all service sectors in today's world (Majkgård and Sharma, 1999),

for example, the music service industry, where its production and consumption can be divided. In this case, service can be transformed into a “tangible medium” which can be produced and stored in a large quantity, and it can be “exported” just like other manufacturing products (Blomstermo, Sharma, and Sallis, 2006).

Various scholars have studied whether the entry mode theories extracted from manufacturing industries can be applied into service industries, and there are two very different conclusions: Some scholars have studied certain sectors of service industry, and they found out that these service sector has similar entering behaviors as manufacturing firms; while some other scholars have studied the service industry as a whole and found out that service firms are not following the same pattern (Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 1998). The difference may lie in the fact that the production and consumption of some service sectors can be separated, just as the music industry mentioned above. Thus some scholars proposed to separate the service sector into two distinctive categories based on its “separability” (Erramilli, 1990; Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 2004; Blomstermo, Sharma, and Sallis, 2006):

- 1) Separable Service (or Hard Service): production and consumption can be separated, for example, software service.
- 2) Non-separable Service (or Soft Service): production and consumption have to take place simultaneously, for example, medical-care service.

The separation of hard service and soft service brought in a new perspective of studying the entry strategies for service firms, as various studies have shown that hard service firms tend to have similar foreign market entry strategy as manufacturing firms since hard service firms may face the similar issues in entering a foreign market as manufacturing firms, while the soft service firms is behaving quite different from manufacturing firms in foreign market entry activities (Erramilli, 1990; Majkgård and Sharma, 1999; Blomstermo, Sharma, and Sallis, 2006). This conclusion does hold true for certain service subsectors, for example, some scholars (Pla-Barber, León-Darder, and Villar, 2011) have studied the Spanish hotel industry and found out that these hotels choose different entry mode compared with manufacturing industry. But on the other side, the study of Weinstein (1977) has shown that American advertising agencies, which is also known as soft services sector, are following a similar foreign market entry mode as manufacturing industry. Those contradictory results confirm what Brouthers and Hennart (2007) have pointed out that “foreign entry is a

multilevel phenomenon. It involves a firm based in a given country setting up an operation in an industry of a particular host country... it is difficult to study empirically... it presents researchers with significant sample of selection and construct measurement challenges...” At the same time, due to the “heterogeneity” within the service industry, it would make more sense to study a specific subsector in order to produce more “fruitful” results (Boddewyn, Halbrich and Perry, 1986).

The above academic studies on foreign market entry strategy seem to be gloomy as there are no existing models that Finland can follow when it tries to export its class teacher education to China. But the studies on entry modes do show that there are various options available in choosing the modes of entering: exporting, licensing, join-venture, and sole-venture. However, regarding the education export to China, sole-venture is not an option for foreign education providers according to Chinese commitments in education service trade (GATS/SC/135, 2002).

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

In this literature review section, I have firstly discussed about the definition, the history, the motives, the challenges and the future trends of the internationalization of higher education. Literature review on this part has shown that the internationalization of higher education is developing rapidly in this globalized world. Key stakeholders of higher education (governments, educational institutions, organizations and private companies) are trying to get internationalized for various reasons, but one of the most common reasons is for generating profits, though for public education institutions, it serves more as a way to alleviate the pressure of the reduced public funding/subsidiary from the government. Meanwhile, the orientation in commercialization of higher education is changing people’s view to see the educational offerings as a “product” that can be traded in the international market. But education is not a regular product, it is a service, and it follows the international service trade agreements, for example GATS, even though these agreements appeared after the emergence of education trade. Thus the second part of the literature review focuses on the higher education trade from different perspectives of service trade agreements, barriers and the future trends of service trade. The study of future trend in service trade has shown

that more and more countries and education providers will be joining in this international education market: Finland is one of these newcomers, who is aiming to export its educational assets. But studies on how Finland can export its education, especially its higher education, are very little and are limited to very general discussions on how Finland and Finnish higher education providers can prepare themselves better “at home” before joining the international market, while these scholars haven’t talked about what are the most valuable and competitive educational “products” that can be exported to a foreign place, where is the targeted foreign market, and how they can effectively deliver their educational offerings to their target customers.

In the second half of literature review section, I conduct a general academic review on Finnish “export product” (class teachers’ education) and foreign market (class teachers’ education sector in China), as well as the entry strategy for foreign market. Previous literature studies on Chinese teacher education have shown that there are clearly some pain points for these emerging class teacher education programs. And at the same time, the studies on Finnish teacher education do prove that Finland has extensive knowledge and good reputation in its teachers’ education, including class teachers’ education. From a business perspective, there is a possibility of bringing Finnish expertise to China, which leads to the literature studies of foreign market entry strategy as it works as a link between the product and market. Several major theories about entry strategies for manufacturing firms were discussed, however these theories can not be directly applied to service industry due to difference in the nature of manufacturing goods and services. And even within the service industry, it is very difficult to generalize an entry theory that applies to all subsectors, since each service subsector is different from each other. Meanwhile, due to the difference in economic, cultural, and social difference, the Finnish “product” will have to be localized or customized based on situation of the local market and the customers’ real needs. That is why a thorough field research on Chinese class teacher training programs and real rural basic education is needed to find out the real needs of class teacher education and identify the most potential entry mode for exporting Finnish class teacher education to rural China.

3. Methodology

In this section, I am going to firstly discuss the original field research design based on research questions and literature reviews, then it will move to the reality of the field research, the data collection methods that I have adopted, and how I am going to analyze the data.

3.1 Research Design

Previous literature studies have identified the main areas of field research, namely the “ecosystem” of teacher education for rural China, which includes several key stakeholders: teachers’ education institutions (usually normal universities), central and local government departments, primary schools, and companies or organizations who are involved in education business. As the main research question implies, the final goal of this field research is to find out how Finnish higher education in class teacher’s education can be exported to China for these primary school in rural areas. The fundamental challenge is to conduct an exploratory research to fully understand what are the real needs of primary school teachers in rural China, how the current class teachers’ training programs are undertaken in China, whether Finnish higher education institutions can provide their expertise in class teachers’ education to these Chinese teachers’ training institutions with a customized offering through a certain entry strategy.

These open inquiries are demanding a qualitative research as it is “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014) and it is “a way to learn about that context up close” (Doz, 2011). But the whole field research is not just about understanding the context, it aims further at identifying the needs of class teacher education in China and providing recommendations for Finnish higher education export, which is inline with the purpose of “applied qualitative research” as it aims to “meet specific information needs and provide outcomes or recommendations” (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994; Pope, Ziebland, and Mays, 2000; Lacey and Luff, 2007). Applied qualitative research was firstly developed for policy and health studies, but it has gradually found its application in business studies as well (Walker, 2011). There is no particular way of conducting applied qualitative research, in fact, this type of research can

comprise various methods since they can bring in much deeper information and different methods can be used to validate information through different sources (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009). The most commonly used qualitative research methods are: interview, observation, focus groups, case study, action research, and life history research (Greener, 2008). In this thesis, as the field research will be conducted in multiple areas with various organizations and individuals, the most productive way of gathering in-depth information would be conducting one-to-one interview with key informants. Also to extend my understanding of real teaching and learning environments in both Finland and China, class observation will be used as well. The following table shows the original field research design.

Table 3. Original Field Research Design

Location	Organizations	Data Collection Method	Purpose
Finland	Primary School in Helsinki	Class observations	To understand the teaching and learning environment with class teachers.
China	Normal Universities	Interviews with persons in charge of class teacher education; Interviews with class teacher students	To understand in general how the class teachers' education has been carried out and if there are any challenge or problem.
	Local Government Departments	Interview with government official in charge of teachers' education	To understand their attitudes towards' class teachers' education and foreign education providers.
	Primary schools in rural China	Class observations; Interviews with school teachers	To understand the teaching and learning in the primary schools in rural areas, and to understand the teachers' needs in terms of improving teaching skills and academic knowledge.
	Education Companies	Interviews with employees at managerial level	To understand how they do education business in China.

The whole design of the field research aims at finding profound information regarding class teacher education in China from different perspectives, including universities, government departments, primary schools, and Finnish education organizations. However, the application of the design was not as easy as expected, and the real journey and final research map will be presented in the next sub-section.

3.2 Reality of Research

The first attempt in getting the visit permissions to the primary schools in Helsinki was not successful since direct email contact without referees did not receive any reply. So I started to ask my Finnish classmates for help. One classmate helped me to get a school visit in her hometown, Salo. After the visit to Salo, another classmate helped me to reach her former school head master, and from this headmaster I was able to conduct another school visit in one primary school in Helsinki. While I was searching for the organizations who are involved in education export activities in Finland, I found Agency C, a company under one Finnish University, who is specialized in exporting Finnish higher education with international business activities. But the email contacts did not work out, so I went to a “Quality Education for All” conference in the middle of Finland, where Agency C participated. From this conference, I was able to get a personal reference to a manager in Agency C who is in charge of Asian operations, and from this manager, I was finally connected with another manager who is based in Shanghai, China.

At the same time, the research in China has been equally challenging, even when I am a native Chinese. There are over 150 universities and over 55 polytechnics that are specialized in teachers’ education in China. But since class teachers’ education is still at its early stage in China, there are only a few universities and polytechnics that have tried or started the class teachers’ programs. Based on the internet research, I found six universities and six polytechnics that are currently running the pilot projects of training class teachers for rural areas. Among them, five universities are located in Chongqing, southwest of China. Since the starting of the project in 2013, these five universities have recruited over 3,000 class teacher students for rural areas. Since other polytechnics and university are not operating in such a large scale in one area, I decided to do my field research in Chongqing. By contacting these five universities through emails and phone calls, I got one confirmed reply from University A, which has been a teachers’ education school for rural areas for decades. After discussing my thesis topic and research plan with Mr. D (Vice Dean) for several times and showing my Finnish student card, I finally gained trust from him and was allowed to visit their school. And during the visit in University A, Mr. D invited me to join their inspection trip to a remote town, County Y, where their first cohort of class teacher students was doing

internships in different primary schools. This inspection trip turned out to be a fruitful journey: I did one interview with Mr. D, two class observations in County Y center primary school and I observed a “focus group” with the local primary school headmasters and the class teacher students, which has provided me with lots of valuable first-hand information.

Also, through the conversation with the teachers from University A, I realized that there is normally no communication between these five normal universities who are involved in class teacher education, and they told me that University B might provide me with much information. But since I never got any email replied from this University B, and my various calls to them have been either “redirected” or rejected, I decided to try my luck by visiting the school without an appointment, but this “spontaneous” visit got rejected in front of their office again. To get some information about their program, I took pictures of all the posters on the information board. I was also searching their classrooms one by one hoping to find an enrolled student to dig more information. In the end, I was lucky to find one girl who was preparing her homework alone, so I took the opportunity and approached her to express my purpose. This girl (Ms. E), who is in the second year of her studies, was willing to do a short interview about their program, and after the interview she also sent me their program guideline, which is a very important document that was not available online. Since all these five universities were regulated by the local Chongqing Education Committee, I also planned the visit to interview the government official who is in charge of the class teacher education projects. I contacted the Chongqing Education Committee over one month before my field trip but got no reply (even though their official website say that they usually reply within a month). So again I decided to visit their office building directly, where I managed to gain the trust from the security guy and got a visiting pass. I was able to find the right person who is in charge of the class teacher education, but I got less than five minutes with her and most of the time she was checking my identity and doubting my purpose as I am from a foreign university. So in the end, I got very little information from her, but I found a document of “Class Teacher Program Guideline for Chongqing” from their official website, which still provided some useful information. During the trip to Chongqing, even though I have collected a lot of information from the class teacher students, but I was not able to set up any interviews with the in-service teachers in rural town to find out what their real needs. To get this information, I conducted another two interviews with primary school teachers in one school in County Z since I have personal connection over there. So in the end, the real field research is carried out as the table on the next page:

Table 4. Reality of Field Research

Location		Date	Organizations	Activities
Finland	Salo	17/10/2016	KK Primary School	Class Observation in Handcraft, Biology, Arts, “God Parents” and “after classes”.
	Helsinki	3/11/2016	TA Primary School	Class Observation in Music and Arts.
China	Chongqing	30/11/2016	University A	Interview with Mr. D (vice dean)
	County Y	1/12/2016	County Y Education Committee	Focus Group with primary schools’ headmasters from county Y and class teacher students (internship) from University A
	County Y	2/12/2016	County Y Center Primary School	Class Observations (Chinese and music) in County Y central primary school
	Chongqing	30/11/2016	University A	Document of program guideline (2015)
	Chongqing	5/12/2016	University B	Interview with Ms. E (second year bachelor student in class teacher program)
		7/12/2016		Document of program guideline (2015)
	Chongqing	5/12/2016	Chongqing Education Committee	Mini-Interview with one government official
		4/1/2017		Document of guideline for class teachers’ education in Chongqing (2016)
	Shanghai	18/11/2016	Agency C	Interview with Ms. F (operation manager in China)
	County Z	30/12/2016	County Z Central Primary School	Interviews with teachers Ms. G (English) and Ms. H (Arts).

Based on this figure, the major part of the field research is done in China in three locations, and first hand-information was collected from various stakeholders, which helped to build a complete database related to this thesis topic.

3.3 Data Collection and Methods

As shown in the table above, due to the complexity of the real situation, data was collected through various sources with different methods (interviews, observations, and documentation). In this section, I am going to discuss briefly about each data collection method that I have used, why I was using this method, and how it was organized.

3.2.1 Interviews as a research method

Interview, as one of the most used methods in generating knowledge and experience, provides “in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experience or viewpoints of a particular topic” (Turner, 2010). Interview has been widely adopted in business studies as scholars can conduct interviews with managers and workers to study business strategies, organizational management, and other general business researches (Birkinshaw, Brannen, and Tung, 2011). Most of the qualitative interviews are actually “semi-structured interviews”, which allows the researcher to follow a certain guide to gain the interviewees’ ideas or viewpoints on the topics related to the research while still enjoy a flexibility to dig into some areas for more in-depth information (Rabionet, 2011; Greener, 2008). During my research, semi-structured interviews are mostly adopted when I had a face-to-face contact with the interviewee/informant to maintain a good flow of the conversation while discovering more information along the process.

The data produced by interviews were recorded in two types of form, and the most used form is note-taking for a personal preference. During my field research for IDBM industry project, I get used to taking notes while doing interviews since I can always go back to what we have discussed and probe into more details if I see any point of interest. Voice recording is used with the manager from Agency C since that interview lasted for over two hours, and it is important for me to have a backup if I miss anything. The written notes of each interview were transformed into digital format right after each interview.

3.2.2 Observation as a research method

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative observation is a researcher who takes field notes in “a structured or semi-structured way” on the “behaviours and activities of individuals at the research site”. Observation has played an important role in social studies as a way for data collection since “what you see with your own eyes and perceive with your own senses is not filtered by what other might have reported to you or what the author of some document might have seen” (Yin, 2011). It is important to have an “observational protocol” to guide the observation in a systematic way (Creswell, 2014). During my field research, the observations followed a protocol of noting “when, who, where, and what”, while “what” constitutes the most important part of the observation, and it has different focus in each observation: in the class observations in Finland and China, the “what” is more about the number of teachers and students, the subject and content of the class, the classroom environment, and the teaching and learning interaction between the teachers and students; in the observation of the focus group with University A, the “what” refers to all the oral content that has been said by every participant.

The data collection during observation was mostly done through note-taking as I can select the most relevant information to put down. Later, the notes were digitalized.

3.2.3 Document analysis as a research method

Document analysis is increasingly regarded as one important qualitative research method, which is usually used together with other qualitative research methods (Bowen, 2009). Documents can come in various format, for example, background paper, event programs, organizational reports, and so on. According to Bowen (2009), “documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources”. In my research, documents were collected primarily to supplement the information gathered through literature review, interviews and observations.

During my field research, I have collected three documents regarding the teachers’ education programs: Class Teacher Program Guidelines in University A and University B, and the

Governmental Guideline for Class Teacher Education in Chongqing. These documents are in Chinese with very detailed information about the class teacher program, so only the relevant information will be picked and taken into data analysis process.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics work as a set of principals in deciding which is wrong and which is right during the research process (Bogdan and Bikken, 1992 cited in Bresler, 1995). According to Resnik (2015), there are various principals for research ethics depending on the discipline of the study, different institutes, and professions. For example, National Institutes of Health has set up fourteen different principals of ethical conduct for government officers and employees (NIH, 2017), while Singapore Statement on Research Integrity has stated only four basic principals (Singapore Statement, 2010). In terms of qualitative research, a few scholars (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden, 2000) have suggested three fundamental principals as *autonomy*, *beneficence*, and *justice*.

Autonomy, which means the acquirement of participants' informed consent and rights of joining or leaving the research at any moment.

Beneficence, which refers to “doing good for others and preventing harm”, where confidentiality and anonymity are usually adopted.

Justice, which “is demonstrated by recognizing vulnerability of the participants and their contributions to the study” in qualitative research.

During my field research, I firstly contacted all the topic-related individuals and organization through emails, which fully stated my purpose of visiting or interviewing and the background of my thesis topic. So, the participants have the full knowledge about my purpose and the autonomy in deciding whether to accept or decline my research inquiries. The only exception happened when I tried to get an interview with government official in Chongqing Education Committee, where I went to the government building without a confirmed appointment. But after I introduced my thesis topic and my purpose of this research, the government official still gave me some limited information. During the field research in both Finland and China, I have gained the consent in conducting interviews and

observations, and none of these participants asked for confidentiality, but since some of the information these Chinese participants revealed to me is a bit sensitive and may cause problems for these participants, so some of the cities and counties are reference as X, Y, and Z, and all the names of institutions and individuals would be anonymous to make sure that none of the participant would subject to harm after this thesis goes public. Again, I did not hide the identity of Chongqing Education Committee since the official there did not provide much information through the interview, and the document acquired is published on the internet. However, in this way, it would be difficult for me to publicly acknowledge those who have participated and helped me during the research, especially Mr. D from University A who helped me to arrange the whole trip to University A and County Y.

3.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, the whole field research of my thesis is following an applied qualitative research with clear objectives. To analyze the data collected from applied qualitative research, a framework approach is usually adopted (Lacey and Luff, 2007). Framework analysis was initially developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) as they suggested that a “thematic framework” can help to guide and facilitate the systematic analysis of the cumbersome data collected from qualitative research. They (1994) also introduced the five key stages of the framework analysis approach (as shown in the Table 5). Smith and Firth (2011) recommended framework approach since these “interconnected stages” will help “the researcher, especially these novice researchers, to move back and forth across the data” to form “explanatory accounts”.

Table 5. Five Stages of Data Analysis in the Framework Approach

(Note: Adapted from Ritchie and Spencer (1994))

Stages	Brief Explanations
I.Familiarization	Immersion in the raw data in order to list key ideas and recurrent themes.
2. Identifying a Thematic Framework	Identifying all the key issues, concepts, and themes by which the data can be examined and referenced. This is carried out by drawing on a priori issues and questions derived from the aims and objectives of the study as well as issues raised by the respondents themselves and views or experiences that recur in the data. The end-product of this stage is a detailed index of the

	data, which labels the data into manageable chunks for subsequent retrieval and exploration.
3. Indexing	Applying the thematic framework or index systematically to all the data in textual form by annotating the transcript with numerical codes from the index, usually supported by short text descriptors to elaborate the index heading.
4. Charting	Rearranging the data according to the appropriate part of the thematic framework to which they relate, and forming charts. Instead of using verbatim text, the charting process involves a considerable amount of abstraction and synthesis.
5. Mapping and Interpretation	Using the charts to define concepts, map the range and nature of phenomena, create typologies and find associations between themes with a view to providing explanations for the findings. This process is influenced by the original research objectives, as well as by the themes that have emerged from the data themselves.

Being a novice researcher myself, I will be following this “framework analysis approach” to analyze all the data collected from the field research, and I am going to give a short description of each step in the next a few sub-sections.

3.5.1 Familiarization and Thematic Framework

The first step of framework analysis is familiarization, which was done by reading through all the data word by word for several times until I have a comprehensive understanding of all the data. In the second step, a Thematic Framework is built upon identifying three types of key issues: “priori” issues, which come from the “original research aims”; emergent issues are derived directly from the collected data; and analytical issues, which are based on recognizing the patterns of “particular views” (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994).

Based on the research questions of this thesis, I developed three “priori issues” as “Problems of the Primary Schools in Rural China” (*linking with RQ1*), “Class Teacher Education Programs in China (Chongqing)” (*linking with RQ2*), and “Finnish Education Export to China” (*linking with RQ3*). During the “familiarization” process, I developed codes for each data document, then these codes were compared across documents and were unified to 58 independent codes. By categorizing these codes, other five key issues emerged: “Problems

of Class Teacher Education Programs”, “Curriculum of Class Teacher Education Programs”, “Internship for Class Teacher Students”, “Teachers’ In-service Trainings”, and “Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools”. These eight categories together constitute the main body of the thematic framework, and categories are built around the three major categories generated from the research questions as shown in the graph below:

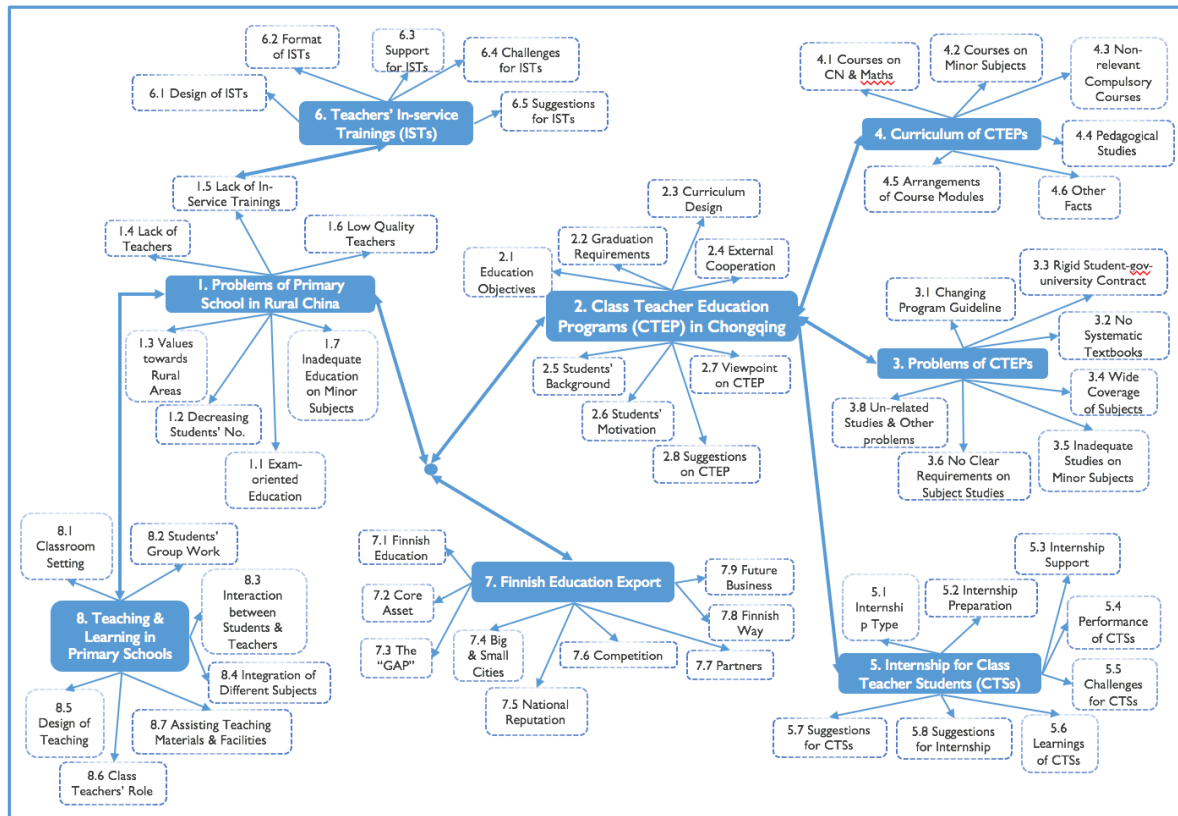


Figure 3. Thematic Framework

As shown in this framework, “Class Teacher Education Programs in Chongqing” is in the central position linking with other two major categories of “Problems of Primary Schools in Rural China” and “Finnish Education Export”. “Problems of Class Teacher Education Programs”, “Curriculum of Class Teacher Education Program”, and “Internship for Class Teacher Students” are three categories that give detailed information from different perspectives regarding “Class Teacher Education Programs in Chongqing”. The “Teachers’ In-service Trainings” is an expanded explanation to one of the codes under “Problems of Primary Schools in Rural China”, and “Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools” offers comparative data between Finnish classrooms and Chinese classrooms. Thus, eight

categories all together create an inter-connected thematic framework to guide the rest analytical process of the collected data.

3.5.2 Indexing and Charting

Based on this thematic framework, the whole data will be indexed with the code number as 1.1, 1.2, and so on. This is the third step of of Indexing, and it is done manually on the paper printout of the data. After all the data has been indexed, the next step is to chart the data into the framework matrix of each theme, which is known as Charting. In every chart, the first horizontal row is of different codes under this theme, and the first vertical column is of different data origins, and the intersections of rows and columns are the specific data that each informant provides in terms of this code. While I was building the charts, in order to cite the origin of the data easier, I will use short form of the information origins as the table shown below.

Table 6. Abbreviations for Information Origins

Information Sources	Abbreviations
Interview with Mr. D from University A	Mr. D
Document of Program Guideline (2015) of University A	Doc UA
Focus Group with Primary Schools' headmasters from County Y, class teacher students (internship) from University A, and government official from Education Committee of County Y	FG – Headmasters (School 1 – 6)
	FG – CTSs (Students 1 – 7)
	FG – Government
Class Observation in County Y Central Primary School	Class – County Y (Chinese & Music)
Interview with Ms. E (Second-year Bachelor Student) from University B	Ms. E
Document of Program Guideline (2015) of University B	Doc UB
Mini-interview with One Government Official from Chongqing Education Committee	Ms. Government
Document of Guideline for Class Teachers' Education in Chongqing (2016)	Doc Government
Interview with Ms. G (English teacher) from County Z Central Primary School	Ms. G

Interview with Ms. H (Arts teacher) from County Z Central Primary School	Ms. H
Interview with Ms. F from Agency C	Ms. F
Class Observation in KK Primary School (Salo)	Class – Salo (Handcraft, Biology, Arts, and “God Parents”)
Class Observation in TA Primary School (Helsinki)	Class – Helsinki (Music & Arts)

These charts can be used to systematically organize the data for further interpretation, however, they are not easy for readers to go through the findings. So, based on the content of each chart and the inter-relationships of different codes, the empirical findings will be presented under each category in a narrative way with the direct citing in *italic*, and these eight charts will be put in the section of appendix as references.

4. Empirical Findings

In this section, findings of the field research will be presented under each category (sub-headings) with third-level headings of different codes under each category.

4.1 Problems of the Primary Schools in Rural China

Based on Chart 1, the problems of these primary schools in rural China are concentrated in three major aspects: the general situation of rural areas, teachers' team, and education on minor subjects.

General Situation of Rural Areas

Basic education in rural areas is very challenging as people tend to see the countryside as “*a poor and bad place*”, and “*you should leave once you have opportunities*” (Ms. F). Even the teachers in rural areas prefer not to stay in rural areas (Ms. E). Meanwhile, students' number in rural areas is decreasing since “*students' parents prefer to send their kids to towns or cities or to private schools for better education*” (Ms. G). And another problem is that “*exam-oriented education is still deeply rooted*” (Student 6 of FG – CTSs), which refers to the emphasis on subjects of Chinese, Mathematics, and English, but little attention on other minor subjects, such as painting, music, dancing, PE, and science.

Issues regarding Teachers' Team

The most mentioned problem regarding teachers is the lack of teachers, especially the lack of minor-subject teachers. In the focus group discussion with six headmasters in County Y, three of them said that they have problems in shortage of teachers (School 2, 5, 6 of FG – Headmasters). Mr. D, headmaster of School 5, and Ms. E all attributed part of this shortage to “maternity leave” since “*two-baby policy leads to the lack of female teachers, who are the*

majority of teachers' team" (Mr. D). Another reason is that *"teachers want to move up to better places"* (Ms. E). Ms. H pointed out that *"when school lacks teachers for certain subjects, other teachers will be forced to teach these subjects regardless teachers' own background"*, and she was forced to teach Chinese, despite her previous studies in arts education. Another teacher, Mr. G, was assigned to teach English while she studied history education in university. In some schools, "Bao Ban Zhi" (means one teacher takes care of all the teaching of one class) is adopted, however according to Mr. D, *"these Bao Ban teachers can only teach Chinese and Mathematics but not other subjects"*.

Another important problem of teachers' team lies in the lack of in-service trainings. Both primary school teachers that I have interviewed in County Z Centre primary school told me that they didn't have any in-service training of the subjects that they are "forced" to teach. Ms. H said that *"most of the good training opportunities were given to the school leaders rather than young teachers"*. And the last problem of teachers' team is low quality, and Mr. D told me that there is phenomenon of *"burnout of the middle-aged teachers, who do not want to learn or change"*.

Education on Minor Subjects

Minor subjects are not as important as Chinese and Mathematics, one reason for this is exam-oriented education, which has been mentioned previously, and another reason is *"they (minor subjects) won't be counted in class or school evaluation"* (Ms. H). This unimportance is confirmed by Mr. D, and he told me that *"minor subjects usually get replaced, and some teachers even suggest not to teach minor subjects"*. This attitude towards minor subjects from schools and teachers is also affecting students' actions. Ms. G gave me an example in her English class as *"students regard English homework as less prior and sometimes they don't finish the English homework"*.

4.2 Class Teacher Education Programs in Chongqing

Class teacher education in Chongqing started in 2013, which is led by Chongqing Education Committee and carried out by five normal universities in Chongqing. Chart 2 shows general information about this program based on the data collected from University A (interview with Mr. D & Doc UA), Focus Group discussion in County Y, University B (interview with Ms. E & Doc UB), and Chongqing Education Committee (interview with Ms. Government & Doc Government). However, findings under this category are scattered into eight sub-categories, so some of these categories will be combined based on their inter-relevance.

Education Objectives & Graduation Requirements

According to Ms. Government, “*class teacher education in short term is to meet the shortage of teachers*”. And in terms of detailed education objectives, Despite the difference in the exact wording in three program guidelines, three common objectives can be identified as: 1) Mind preparation, passion for education and good morality in mind and profession; 2) Knowledge preparation, class teacher students need to master a wide knowledge of different subjects; 3) Skills preparation, which requires the class teacher students to have pedagogical skills in organizing teaching practices (Doc UA; Doc UB; Doc Government). Meanwhile, there are some minor differences as well: both Doc UA and Doc Government specially mentioned “life-long learning”; both Doc UB and Doc Government pointed out “to meet the needs of basic education reform”; both Doc UA and Doc UB emphasized the “devotion to education in rural areas”; and “education research” was only proposed in Doc Government.

Regarding graduation requirement, Doc Government only stated strict requirement on Mandarin, while left other tests or certificates to HEIs to decide. Doc UA provided very detailed information about the tests and levels that students need to achieve, but Doc UB only listed these tests without clear requirement on which level class teacher students should have. This is verified by second year student, Ms. E, as she said that “*there is still no clear requirement on whether we need to pass the College English test or not*”.

Curriculum Design & External Cooperation

In Doc Government, it clearly proposed that “curriculum needs to have full-subjects structure, to be practice-oriented, to integrate different subjects, and to extend class teacher students’ specialty”. But it is unclear who should take the responsibility of designing the curriculum for class teacher education programs. According to Mr. D, “*curriculum is decided by the Chongqing Education Committee and these normal universities*”, however, Ms. Government said that “*curriculum is designed by higher education institutions*”. In terms of external cooperation, only Doc UB mentioned that they are “working with teachers’ training institutions and primary schools in pedagogical and practices courses for class teacher students”.

Class Teacher Students’ Background & Motivation

Class teacher education program is aiming at rural areas, so students were selected from different counties (Mr. D), and according to Ms. E, “*most of the students are from ‘not wealthy’ families since they don’t need to pay and they receive money*”. She also told me that “*students want to work back in their hometown, because it is a way to release the family burden since you don’t need to pay, and it is easier for later working life being a local*”.

Viewpoint and Suggestions on Class Teacher Education Programs (CTEP)

In general, the viewpoint on class teacher education programs is positive. During the focus group, several headmasters expressed that “*it is meaningful*” (School 2) and “*we support class teacher education as primary school teachers should know everything*” (School 6). The government official (FG – Government) said that “*class teacher education program has trained excellent teachers for our county*”. Doc UB stressed four key values of class teacher education: 1) It meets the international trend in class teacher system; 2) It helps to solve the shortage of teachers in rural areas; 3) It meets the challenge of basic education reform in subject integration; 4) It helps to ease pupils’ burden and promote the full-qualities oriented education. Ms. E believed that “*class teacher education program will be the trend for educating primary school teachers, and the job-location binding will be cancelled*”. But the headmaster of School 2 pointed out that most of the class teacher students cannot teach English, and government official suggest this program “*to understand the needs of future*

students and the curriculum” (FG – Government). And for these class teacher students (Student 3, 4, 5, 7 of FG - CTSs), they think that they lack deep studies on minor subjects from this program.

4.3 Problems of Class Teacher Education Programs

Chart 3 lists six major problems regarding class teacher education programs in Chongqing based on the data collected from Mr. D, focus group discussion in County Y, Ms. E, and Doc Government. These six problems can be further combined into two groups as listed below.

General Issues

There are three general issues: 1) The program guideline from the Government has changed several times (Mr. D); 2) There are no systematic textbooks. Mr. D said that *“two years ago, the plan was that universities work together to design textbooks for class teacher education programs, but so far we are still using the existing textbooks for subject-based teachers’ education”*. Doc Government was still suggesting universities to *“work together to develop the textbooks for truly integrated education”* in 2016; 3) Rigid student-government-university contract. Mr. D told me that *“class teacher students have to work in the agreed county for at least six years, and they cannot attend the graduate school, and if student does not graduate or work at the arranged primary school, they will have to pay the fine about 100, 000 CNY”*. Ms. E said that there is one student who is still negotiating with the school about going to graduate school.

Issues related to Subjects Studies

In this group, there are three problems. The first problem is the wide coverage of subjects, which has been mentioned from three different sources. In the focus group, two students

mentioned that *“too many things need to be learnt so quickly”* (Student 3 & 4 of FG - CTSs), and the government official in this focus group also pointed out these class teacher students *“study too shallow, and they do not meet the needs of students”* (FG – Government). Ms. E from University B also said that *“we have to learn so many things, but the study on each subject is very superficial”* and *“we are not able to learn everything!”* The second problem is inadequate study on minor subjects. Four students from the focus group mentioned that they did not have enough studies on minor subjects, for example music, drawing, PE, and science (Student 3, 4, 5 & 7 of FG - CTSs). Student 5 said that the university studies on PE were useless, and Student 7 said that he didn’t have any studies on science education. The third problem is no clear requirement on subject studies, which is only mentioned by Ms. E. *“Every teacher’s requirement is different, and there is no common standard”*.

Apart from these six problems mentioned above, some other problems also appeared. One student said, *“Many theories and knowledge studied in university are not related with the things that I need to teach”* (Student 3 of FG – CTSs). Another student said, *“Panting professor did not know how to teach the class teacher students”* (Student 4 of FG - CTSs). Ms. E pointed out that *“most of the students would not prefer the English direction”* since in her university, class teacher students can choose “specialty” direction in Chinese or English.

4.4 Curriculum of the Class Teacher Education Programs

Chart 4 is built on the data from three program guidelines of Doc UA, Doc UB, and Doc Government, from which six sub-sectors have been identified: Courses on Chinese and Mathematics, Courses on Minor Subjects, No-relevant Compulsory Courses, Pedagogical Studies, Arrangement of the course modules, and others. These sub-sectors can be further combined into three groups as: share of each subject / subject group, arrangement of course modules, and other facts. One thing needs to be noted is that Doc UA and Doc UB are for the students of year 2015, and Doc Government is for the students of year 2016, so there might be an adaption from the 2015 in the Doc Government.

Share of Each Subject / Subject Groups

For each program guideline, I counted the credits of each subject or subject group, then calculated the share of the total credits, and the percentages are shown in Chart 4. The first group of sub-sectors can be presented into one table, which shows the percentage of each subject or subject groups among three different guidelines.

Table 7. Share of Each Subject / Subject Group

Percentage of Each Subject or Subject Groups			
Subjects	Doc Yangtze	Doc Chongqing	Doc Government
Chinese	15.4%	13% or 8%	16.7% or 9.9%
Mathematics	9%	12.5% or 7.5%	14.8% or 8.6%
English	6%	13.4% or 8.4%	10.5% or 7.4%
Painting	5.3%	7.2% or 4.7%	9.9% or 6.2%
Music and Dancing	4%	11.9% or 6.9%	6.2% or 3.7%
PE	4%	5% or 2.5%	9.3% or 4.3%
Science	2.6%	5%	4.3% or 1.9%
Non-relevant	11%	5.3%	9.9%
Pedagogy	11%	19.4%	21.3%

In Doc UB and Doc Government, class teacher students can choose different direction for deeper studies, thus the percentage of each subject has two numerical values. Based on this table, we can see that Chinese and Mathematics studies are very important parts of all three guidelines, but the weights of credits are different. English study is very important part in Doc UB and Doc Government, but it is much less important in Doc UA. The results show that Doc UB and Doc Government spread more or less equally among Chinese, Mathematics, and English Studies, while Doc UA favors Chinese study. The percentage of other minor subjects (painting, music and dancing, PE, and science) is generally lower than Chinese, Mathematics, and English, and among all three guidelines, Doc UB has the most equalized share of different subjects.

In terms of un-related compulsory studies, it is usually referred to socialist studies. The percentage share of Doc UA has more than two times of Doc UB, and Doc Government is

in between these two guidelines. For pedagogy studies, it constitutes 11% in Doc UA, only half of Doc Government. Both Doc UB and Doc Government have met the international average of 20% in pedagogical studies.

Arrangements of Course Modules

There is a huge difference in the arrangements of course models among these three guidelines. The following table is built based on the curriculum structure of these three program guidelines.

Table 8. Curriculum Structure

Arrangements of the Course Modules						
Document Yangtze			Document Chongqing		Document Government	
Modules		Content	Modules	Content	Modules	Content
a. Theories Studies	General Education	Mostly socialist studies	a. General Education	Socialist studies	a. General Education	Socialist Studies
	Base Course	Part of pedagogical studies.		Subject studies on Music & Dance, Painting, PE & Health.		Subject studies on English, Music & Dance, Painting & Calligraphy; PE & Health, Society.
	Core Courses	Studies on each subject + pedagogical studies on Chinese and Maths.	b. Subject Base Courses	Education psychology	b. Core Courses	Subject Studies on Chinese and Maths
	Development Courses	Pedagogical studies on CN & Maths and other pedagogy related courses.		Subject studies on Chinese, English, Society, Science, Maths.		Pedagogical studies on each subject
b. Practices Studies	General Education	Military, Politics, Safety, and Psychology.	c. Core Courses	Compulsory studies on each subject	c. Development Courses (≥ 16 credits)	Elective studies on Choice of Direction: Literature (16); Maths & Science (16); Society (8); PE (8); Arts (16); Activities (8); Students' psychology (8); School Management (8); Education Research (7).
	Base Courses	Class management + students' psychology.		Elective studies on choice of direction: Literature or Science (includes Maths and science) ≥ 8 credits; Arts direction ≥ 4 credits.	d. Practices	Internship (12)
	Capabilities Practices	IT, handwriting, spoken English,	d. Pedagogical Studies	Subject-based pedagogical studies		Thesis (3)

		internship (19) and Thesis (5).				
	Innovation Practices	Elective courses in science, research, and students' activities.	e. Practices	Internship (13)		
				Thesis (4)		

As shown in the table above, even though these three guidelines are using the same wording for some modules, the content under each module is actually very different. All three guidelines have a section called “General Education”, but in Doc UA, it is mostly about socialist studies, while in Doc UB and Doc Government, it refers to the socialist studies plus general studies on a few subjects. Both Doc UA and Doc UB have a module called “Base Courses”, in Doc UA it constitutes part of the pedagogical studies, while in Doc UB it consists psychological studies plus subject studies. Both Doc UA and Doc Government have the “Development Course” module: in Doc UA it represents part of pedagogical studies; and in Doc Government it refers to the elective studies of the direction that class teachers would choose. While Doc UB and Doc Government assign a separate module of “Practice” for internship and thesis, Doc UA puts internship and thesis together with IT, handwriting and spoken English under a module called “Capabilities Practices”. And only in Doc UB, pedagogical studies are in a separate module, rather than mixed with other courses. Also, the logic of the arrangement in Doc UA is a bit confusing as the content does not really fit the name of the module, for example Development Courses. Compared with the curriculum of Finnish class teacher education, Doc UB adopts the most similar curriculum.

Other Facts

In these three documents, there are some details of each document that require attention. Doc UA: compulsory studies on Integrated Education are of 1.5 credits. Doc UB: elective studies on Special Education are of 2 credits and on Education for Left-behind kids are of 1 credit. Doc Government: compulsory studies on Integrated Education are of 2 credits; students' psychology, school management, and education research are elective studies; and this government guideline only works as a reference for normal universities.

4.5 Internship for Class Teacher Students

Chart 5 gives a holistic overview of the internship for class teacher students, which is constituted of eight different aspects. Again, these eight aspects can be put into four different groups based their inter-connections.

Internship Type

This is an independent code, which gives information about the location, time, and arrangement of class teacher students' internship. In terms of location, Mr. D said, *"it is arranged in nine districts, but every year the locations are different"*, and Ms. E said, *"before they do internship in the destination schools, but now they do the internship in both cities and counties"*. This shows that currently, students are mostly doing the internship in rural areas, while there are chances of doing internship in cities as well. In terms of time, Mr. D told me that it normally lasts for one semester, but when the students will do the internship is not clear. On the other side in University B, the internship time is also changing all the time. *"For the students of 2012, they have one-week internship in the second year already, but for the students of 2014, they will have two-weeks internship until the third year"*, said Ms. E. And in terms of arrangement, the data collected from the focus group shows that class teacher students are assigned to teach different subjects, based on which subject lacks teachers or teachers are not available, and usually class teacher student teaches one or two subjects (FG – Headmasters & FG – CTSs).

Internship Preparation and Support

The information related to internship preparation was given by class teacher students, and according to them, they didn't receive enough education on minor subjects for teaching (Student 3, 4 & 5 of FG – CTSs). One student who was assigned to teach science complained, *"I haven't learnt any related courses in university"* (Student 7 of FG – CTSs). Internship support was provided in the primary schools, and it is usually in the form of "one to one support" as one key teacher gives guidance to one class teacher student (School 1, 4 & 5 of FG – Headmasters; Student 1 of FG – CTSs). Headmaster of School 4 also mentioned that

they had “*weekly meet-up to share good and bad things, problems and solutions*”. Apart from teaching support, local government also offered support in accommodation and safety education (FG – Government).

Performance, Challenges and Learnings of Class Teacher Students

In general, the performance of class teacher students is good based on the comments from headmasters. Four out of six headmasters (School 1, 3, 5, 6 of FG – Headmasters) praised the good learning attitudes of these students, and one headmaster (School 5) considered class teacher students better than subject teacher students. However, headmaster of School 2 said, “*attitudes of teaching is good, but they still have some problems in teaching*”. In terms of challenges for class teacher students, both headmasters and the students themselves have listed a few, and challenges from these two perspectives link with each other as shown in the figure below.

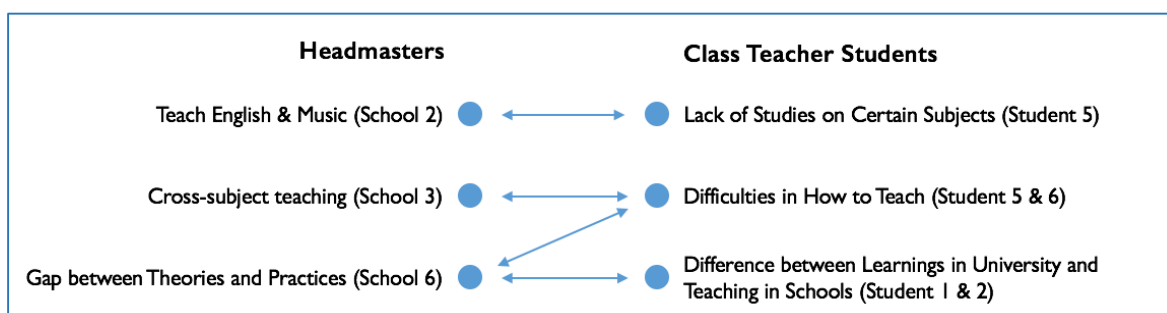


Figure 4. Challenges for Class Teacher Students

Meanwhile, class teacher students did learn things in the primary school as well. Student 1 attended Chinese classes taught by other teachers to learn how to teach. Student 5 watched how other people teach and he copied it in his own classes. But this learning is confined to these subjects that the students are currently teaching. And one student also learnt that “*Every kid is very different. You have to prepare a few options when you are planning your classes*”, said Student 6.

Suggestions for Class Teacher Students and Internship

Suggestions were proposed by headmasters and government officials during the focus group. Even though they gave different suggestions, “connecting theories and practices” was mentioned by two headmasters (School 3, 6) and the government official (FG – Government). Apart from this, School 1 suggested that students need to have a mind preparation in equalizing education of each subject, and government official asked the class teacher students to prepare themselves for the needs of future students and educational guideline (FG – Government). Both School 3 and 4 suggested students to take internship as a learning opportunity, and School 3 asked students to interact more with in-service teachers. Also, School 1 and FG – Government suggested class teacher students to solve their own living problems in rural areas first. In the end, headmaster of School 6 recommended that the internship can be arranged in the first two years of university study to help the class teacher students to “*gain practical experience in school management and teaching methods*”.

4.6 Teachers’ In-service Trainings

As mentioned in the Methodology section, teachers’ in-service trainings are not one of these priori issues but a category arisen during the process of data analysis. It was briefly mentioned in Chart 1 as one of the problems of primary schools in rural areas. Data collected from higher education institution (Mr. D), government sector (FG – Government & Ms. Government), in-service teachers (Ms. G and Ms. H), and educational agency (Ms. F) presented a set of detailed information regarding teachers’ in-service education in China in Chart 6. In this chart, there are five aspects, and following previous practices, they will be grouped according to their relationships.

Design and Format of In-service Trainings

Ms. F from Agency C has extensive experience in organizing in-service trainings in Beijing and Shanghai, according to her, “*all the in-service training projects are designed case-by-case and are based on the needs of Chinese clients*”, and these customers are usually municipal education committees. On the other side, Ms. Government from Chongqing

Education committee told me that “*organizations or companies have to submit their plans, and education committee will organize experts to evaluate these plans, which is known as ‘bidding’*”. This information shows that training providers usually need to work with local education committees to craft a training project. Usually in-service trainings take two formats according to Ms. F: either Finnish experts come to China or Chinese teachers go to Finland, and their trainings normally take place in the real schools rather than a lecture room. Ms. F also told me, “*the training arrangement is very intensive, and teachers have to attend classes from 8 am to 5 pm every weekday for three weeks in Finland*”.

Support and Challenges for In-service Trainings

Mr. D mentioned “National Training Program” that the central government invested 500 million CNY in teachers’ training, however Ms. H pointed out that “*national support cannot really benefit the teachers in the ‘frontline’ since there are many levels in between*”. Ms. F summarized four major challenges based on her experience: 1) Every teacher is full with his or her own schedule, so many of them have to use their personal time for training; 2) Number of teaching classes counts as an important part of their salaries, but the training is not counted in the salary system; 3) Teachers find that the things they learn from the trainings cannot be applied in their own classes; and 4) Some teachers are negative in their identity of being a (vocational) teacher, thus they are not willing to make progress. The second challenge is supported by Mr. D, and the third challenge is confirmed by Ms. G as she found the training meaningless for her.

Suggestions for In-service Trainings

Both Ms. G and Ms. H have proposed to provide young teachers with good training opportunities to expand their vision of the outside world. The government official from County Y Education Committee suggested that “*normal universities can communicate more with in-service teachers, to study their needs and strengthen the teachers’ in-service trainings*” (FG – Government).

4.7 Finnish Education Export

Chart 7 is built on the data mostly from Ms. F. Even though, she is the single informant that gives information about Finnish education export, her insights provide valuable information for further discussion. There are nine different codes under the category of Finnish education export, and some of them can be grouped together, but the rest are independent from each other.

Finnish Education and its Core Asset

During the interview with Ms. F, she mentioned the excellent Finnish education and Finnish educators several times, and you can feel that she was really proud of Finnish education. She said, *“Finnish education is for every kid in the schools, they want everyone to receive the same quality education”*, and she believed, *“the good education of Finland is because these teachers have received good education since they were young”*. Also as Agency C has been mostly dealing with teachers’ in-service training in China, Ms. F believed that they have the core asset of Finnish education since they have a teachers’ training school, where the most advanced teaching methods and new education guideline are applied and tested. She also told me that *“the collaboration between schools, universities, and how government can get involved in education reform, is what the Chinese government needs”*.

The “GAP”

Selling Finnish education to China is not easy, and according to Ms. F, she usually finds a “gap” between what China wants and what Finland can offer. *“Many of our Chinese customers want a whole package to try out. And very often they want to see some materials first, for example a set of textbooks, but we don’t have existing textbooks”*, said Ms. F.

National Reputation, Competition, and Big & Small Cities

These three codes are presented together since they are tightly linked with each other, so the data regarding these three codes will be combined. First, PISA results of Finland have helped Finnish education to gain some international reputation, and in big cities of China (mostly refers to Beijing and Shanghai in Ms. F's point of view), people have a strong concept of Finland and Finnish education. While in small cities, Finland as a nation is not so well recognized, thus Finnish education is less favourable compared with American or British education, who have much stronger national images. But Ms. F thinks that education providers from US and UK are usually too profit-oriented, and it is very difficult to tell the quality of the various providers.

Partners

Ms. F told me that Agency C has established partnership with Education Committees of Beijing and Shanghai in teachers' trainings. In Finland, they also have access to the resources from two universities. But when I mentioned about another education Agency SC (a company specialized in exporting Finnish basic education to China), she got interested. For her, SC is not a competitor. But she wondered if SC has access to the core asset of Finnish education, and since SC is promoting itself as a Finnish brand, she is concerned that if SC does not really have the access to the core asset, it may damage the Finnish image. She also told me that they have been thinking about working with SC, but they are worried that SC may tell others that Agency C is an affiliate agency under SC.

Finnish Way

Since class teacher education is the key topic of my thesis, I mentioned about various class teacher education programs in different cities. She did not know much about this, but she was interested to get to know about the result of my field research in Chongqing. But even though the class teacher education seems to be a potential large market, she told me, "*We don't have to start in such a big scale, Finnish people tend to do things slowly so that they can adjust during the process*". She also told me that many Finns cannot compromise, for example, the touring activities during the training. "*I think sometimes they (Finns) are too*

serious, sometimes they have to understand other needs of the teachers under training programs, for example, the needs for shopping”, she added.

Future Business

There is some other information she provided I think is worth mentioning in this section. She told me that they had the plan of opening an international school in Shanghai, but since the central government has tightened up the international cooperation, the plan has been postponed infinitely. However, in the future, they want to become a NGO doing projects to support education development in China. But if Agency C wants to expand their business in Chongqing, they will have to talk with the Chongqing Education Committee first according to Mr. D. He also told me, *“Our main job is focusing on the education, and the international cooperation will be organized by the Chongqing Education Committee”*. Another important information I got from Ms. F is that they usually do not do any market research before the projects, and all the trainings are developed based on clients’ needs. Here the clients are usually referred to education committees, but the real customers of the trainings are in-service teachers, and it remains unknown if Agency C knows the needs of these teachers who are coming for the training before they design the trainings.

4.8 Teaching in Primary Schools

The study on the teaching in Finnish primary schools was aiming at understanding how the arts classes are organized and how class teachers give these classes, as my own education in primary school was subject-based. Also, I observed two classes in China as well to update myself with the current teachings in rural areas. Chart 8 is consisted of eight independent codes on the information of class room setting, students’ group work, interaction between teachers and students, the design of teaching, integration of different subjects, teachers’ role and assisting teaching materials. Despite the difference in the subject of these classes, much of the information collected in Finnish schools is actually similar, thus we can make a synergy, and present the findings of code 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 as shown in the table on the next page.

Table 9. Synergy of Chart 8 (partial)

Country / Code	8.1 Classroom Setting	8.2 Students' Group Work	8.3 Interaction between Students & Teachers	8.4 Integration of Different Subjects	8.7 Assisting Teaching Materials & Facilities
China	Typical classroom setting with teacher in the front, and students sitting in rows.	Students were asked to work in pairs to discuss the answers of one question.	Teacher raised up questions and students gave answers.	Music class involves a little bit of dancing (body movements).	Digital devices, and some music instruments are available in the classrooms even in rural areas.
Finland	Students normally sit in a round shape or in groups with four or five students.	Group works were frequently observed in Finnish classes to work together on one project.	Class teachers or assistant teachers usually walk around and gave one-to-one guidance.	Integration of subjects are commonly practiced as one teacher told me, "According to the new curriculum, we should combine things, and teacher can combine everything they want.	ICT facilities in each classroom. Students have accesses to all the materials that are necessary for the class, for example, paints and papers for the drawing, wool and foam for the handcraft.

Based on this table, we can see that under the class teacher system, teaching in Finland is organized in a very different way compared with China. In Finland, group work is common and facilitated by the classroom setting, and integrated education is widely applied by class teachers as they can and they are encouraged to combine different subjects. However, in China, teaching in the classroom is still following the traditional way and teachers give subject-based teaching. But one thing surprised me is that ICT facilities are well

implemented in both Chinese and Finnish classrooms, which means that primary schools in China are equipped to have access to digital information.

During the class observations in Finland, information regarding the “Design of Teaching” and view on “Class Teachers’ Role” were collected. However, in China, in terms of design of teaching, the only information I got was when Ms. G told me that she had to learn by herself in teaching English as she did not have English background. And in terms of class teachers’ role, since there is no “official” class teacher yet in China, this information was not available during the field trip.

Design of Teaching

In Finland, the teaching activities can be designed by more than one teacher. For example, the handcraft class I observed in Salo was designed by two class teachers. Teachers are autonomous in designing the teaching: one class teacher in Salo told me, *“It takes time for me to think about what to do. I want to do something that I would like to do with the students”*. And after the class observations, I also encountered one teachers’ meeting as they were sharing information and experiences to help each other to improve.

Class Teachers’ Role

Class teachers’ view on their roles are concentrated in three aspects: First, class teachers do not need to know deep knowledge about each subject; Second, class teachers need to see every kid as an individual; Third, class teachers’ role is to support each kid to learn.

In this section, findings regarding primary schools in rural areas present a severe situation of primary school education in rural areas, which is calling for urgent solutions. Research findings collected in Chongqing showed a holistic image of the class teacher education programs in University A and University B, which provides valuable first-hand information from different aspects, including backgrounds, problems/challenges, curriculum design, and class teacher students’ internship. Half-day interview with Ms. F from Agency C is a great

opportunity to understand Finnish education export to China from the perspective of a Finnish institution. Some of the findings confirm with what have been discussed in the Literature Review, for example, Finland's national image is not so strong compared with United States and United Kingdom. Some of the findings offer information and new insight of the fields that the research questions want to probe into, for example, the problems of the current class teacher education programs. And the rest of the findings may seem to be irrelevant at a glance, for example, category of "teachings in primary schools", but they can be used to suggest future research. To sum up, all the findings will be interpreted to support the formation of Discussion section and Conclusion section.

5. Discussion

The discussion section will be organized by combining literature review and empirical findings with the research questions. As mentioned in the Introduction section, the main research question of this thesis is “*How the Finnish Class Teacher Education can be ‘exported’ to China for the primary schools in rural areas?*” Three sub-questions will be discussed one by one to guide the answers progressively towards answering this main question.

5.1 Answer towards the Sub-question One

What are the real needs of these primary schools in rural China?

To find out the real needs, it is necessary to understand what the challenges or problems that these primary schools in rural areas are facing. In the previous introduction section, three major problems were identified as bad facilities, insufficient funding, and imbalanced teachers’ team (21 CEDU, 2013). Since my thesis focuses on teachers’ education, the first two problems are out of the range of the topic, and research findings in Chart 1 confirm the serious problem regarding teachers’ team. Chart 1 also confirms the problems of teachers’ team proposed by Liu (2011): low academic background of teachers and poorly structured team of subject teachers. Apart from this, the field research also contributes in identifying other problems in rural areas: lack of in-service training for teachers, exam-oriented education, inadequate education on minor subjects, and negative values towards rural areas. These problems are not isolated, on the contrary, they are inter-related with each other as shown in Figure 4 below.

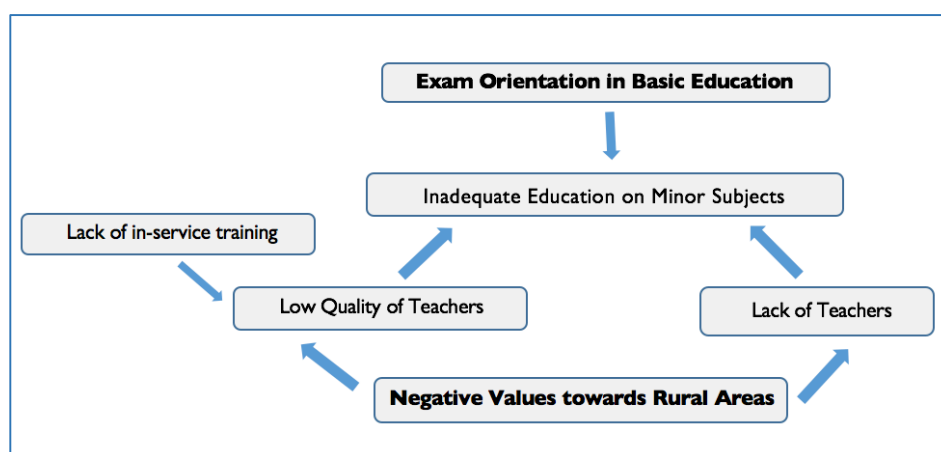


Figure 5. Problem of Primary Schools in Rural China

The above figure indicates two root problems of primary school education in rural areas: people's negative values towards rural areas and exam orientation in basic education. As mentioned in the literature review section, Chinese dual social structure of city and county has made rural areas much less attractive for teachers (Wang, 2013). Young teacher graduates do not want to come to rural areas, and teachers who are working in rural areas want to find a way to move up to towns or cities (Liu, 2011). In the end, there are an outflow of in-service teachers but not enough inflow of young teachers, which has led to the problem of lack of teachers, especially the teachers for minor subjects. At the same time, the teachers' quality is very low as Mr. D has implied, and lack of in-service training for these "left behind" teachers further worsen this situation. Low quality of the teachers and lack of teachers together contribute to the problem of inadequate education on minor subjects. When schools lack teachers for certain subject, they either ask other teachers to take over the teaching or they simply replace the classes with other subjects, usually Chinese or Mathematics (Wang, 2016; Ms. H).

Meanwhile the other root problem of exam orientation is negatively affecting the education on minor subjects as well. On one side, school evaluation is solely based on exam scores of Chinese and Mathematics, so headmasters and teachers tend to have a mind-set that minor subjects are not important and they can be replaced with major subjects. On the other side, students also see the minor subjects as less important compared with Chinese and Mathematics, so they will not take the studies on minor subjects seriously.

Education reform in basic education has required the education system to support the development of pupils through a balanced overall-quality education from 2001 (MOE of PRC, 2001), which aims, at least, equal education in different subjects, including minor subjects. However, education on minor subjects is still poorly organized in rural areas. So, the urgent need for these primary schools is full education on minor subjects. As shown in the previous literature studies on education in rural areas, national government has tried to fulfil this need either by Free Education Programs or National Training Plan, but both projects have certain limitations (Yang and Wang, 2007; Ye, 2011). Meanwhile, with the decreasing of students' number (Wu, 2014), some places have started class teacher education programs to meet this urgent need under the premise of small class size, and the next Sub-RQ 2 is aiming at finding out information about these programs.

5.2 Answer towards the Sub-question Two

What kind of class teacher's training programs are undertaken in China? And what are the challenges or problems that they are facing?

In China, a few cities have started the class teacher education programs, but as mentioned in the Methodology section, I finally chose the education programs in Chongqing since it is one of the largest in terms of scale, and it requires the highest academic level among all these programs, so the following answer will be mostly based on the research findings in Chongqing (Chart 2, 3, 4, 5).

The class teacher education program in Chongqing started in 2013, which is led by Chongqing Education Committee and carried out by five normal universities. It is a four-year program leading to a Bachelor's degree. According to the data from Chart 2, students are recruited from different counties in rural areas, and they need to sign a contract with the local county government and the normal university to make sure that they will finish their studies and work in that county for at least six years. In exchange, during their study, class teacher students do not need to pay tuition fee or accommodation fee, and they receive monthly living expenses. As Ms. Government has pointed out that the primary goal of class

teacher education program in Chongqing is to meet the shortage of teachers, which belongs to one of the benefits of class teacher education proposed by Zhang and Xiao (2015).

Program guidelines from University A, University B, and Chongqing Education Committee all state that the primary objective of class teacher education is to prepare class teachers, who can teach different subjects in primary schools in rural areas. Both local education committee and primary school headmasters in rural areas welcome class teachers as they believe this program will be meaningful for the primary schools. But at the same time, findings of Chart 2, 3, 4 and 5 also reveal several serious problems or challenges for the class teacher education programs in Chongqing. Some of these challenges (challenge 3 & 4) are the commons ones as they have been mentioned in the previous literature review section, while the others (challenge 1 & 2) are more specific problems linking to the programs in Chongqing.

Challenge 1 - Lack of Coordination.

Chongqing Education Committee, as the administrative department, is in charge of regulating the class teacher education programs in five normal universities, and it was supposed to organize these universities in designing the textbooks for the class teacher education program. However, after four years of running this program, there is no update on the textbooks at all, and the government officer is still calling for the collaboration between universities in developing textbooks for integrated education (Ms. Government). Meanwhile, lack of coordination is also reflected on curriculum design. Program guideline from the Government only works as a reference, University A and University B are following their own program guideline respectively, while these two guidelines have huge differences in terms of curriculum structure as shown in Chart 4. For example, students from University A are supposed to learn every subject, while in University B, on top of the general studies of each subject, students are required to choose one direction in literature or science plus one direction in arts to build deeper knowledge and skills on certain subjects as specialties. This huge difference in education guideline may lead to the difference in class teacher students' quality and competence among different universities.

Challenge 2 - No Clear Standards.

This challenge is mostly reflected in graduation requirement and in curriculum design. In terms of graduation requirement, the government guideline provides vague requirements in language and IT skills, while leaving the universities to decide what level they want the class students to achieve (Chart 4). In terms of the whole curriculum design, there are no standards in how much studies are required for each subject, pedagogical studies, and socialist studies. For example, the percentage of socialist studies in University A is twice of University B, while University B has almost twice of pedagogical studies of University A. But unclear standard may not be a problem just in Chongqing, scholars themselves probably didn't even realize this problem. Jiang (2016) proposed the "GPS" model for building comprehensive abilities of class teacher students, in which Jiang suggested students to "master the necessary knowledge of each subject", however, she failed to give explicit explanation on how much knowledge is regarded as "necessary". It is true that class teacher education programs are still at its early development, but this ambiguous description of graduation and subject standards puts the quality of class teacher students at risk.

Challenge 3 – Needs in Integrated Education.

Scholars (Wang and Zheng, 2016) have called for "breaking down the walls" between subjects in class teacher education, but sadly, at least the three program guidelines in Chongqing have proved that the whole class teacher education program is merely "an addition of different subject studies" just as Jiang (2016) has pointed out. Students from both University A and B have complained that they need to study so many different things with only superficial touch of each subject (Chart 3). At the same time, the feedback from the school headmasters and government officer in County Y also reveal that class teacher students study too shallow and do not meet the needs of students, and they also find that these class teacher students are not able to do cross-subject teaching, which is one of the basic skills that class teachers should have. In fact, courses on integrated education is only of 1.5 credits (compulsory) in Doc UA and 2 credits (elective) in Doc Government, all less than 1% of the total studies. It is quite clear that the class teacher students themselves did not receive any or enough integrated education in their university studies, so it would be unrealistic to expect them to apply integrated education in primary schools.

Challenge 4 - No Comprehensive Teaching Practices.

In the literature review section, the problem related to teaching practice is mostly about the lack of teaching practices (Liu, 2016; Yu, 2016). Research findings in Chongqing confirmed this insufficiency, but they are pointing at a larger problem: the whole arrangement of teaching practice is not well planned. According to the data from Chart 5, internship for class teacher students is poorly organized. Students are assigned to teach one or two subjects, depending on which subject lacks teachers. This type of internship restricts class teacher students from performing teaching practices in other subjects, not to mention the practice of integrating different subjects. At the same time, many class teacher students from the focus group mentioned that they find it difficult for them to transfer the learnings in universities into teaching content or methods in primary schools (Chart 3). Headmasters and the government officer also notice that there is a gap between these class teacher students' learnings (theories) and real teaching practices (Chart 3). In fact, none of the program guideline states any goal for teaching practices. The internship of teaching practices in Chongqing works more like a way of gaining some experience rather than as an important part of the systematic learning of this program.

In the previous literature review section, lack of commitment to rural areas is one of the major challenges (Xiao, 2014), which does not seem to be a problem in Chongqing. One of the reasons might be that students are directly hired from rural areas and they are willing to work back in their hometowns (Ms. E). However, the above four challenges demand the Chongqing Education Committee and five normal universities to communicate with each other more and to work together in building a more balanced and unified program guideline with clear standards to make sure that class teachers students are trained in a systematic way in universities and during their internship in primary schools to guarantee the quality of each class teacher student.

5.3 Answer towards the Sub-question Three

How Finland can provide a customized “product” to solve these problems?

And in which way Finland can deliver this product?

I. From Challenges to a Customized Product

Challenges of class teacher education programs in Chongqing offer a good reference of their needs. Based on this reference of needs from field research in Chongqing and the strengths of teachers' education in Finland from both literature review and field research, we can start to build some ideas of a service/product that will probably solve the problems of class teacher education programs in Chongqing.

Need 1: Universities – Government Collaboration

In Chongqing, local education committee should be the regulator and facilitator to promote the interactions and cooperation between universities in designing textbooks, curriculum, and other related work. However, Chongqing Education committee “gives up” this responsibility turning universities into competitors rather than collaborators. The huge difference between program guidelines of University A and University B is one of the proofs that there was no communication between these two universities. Previous studies on teachers' education in Finland has shown that even though there are eight different universities that are involved in teacher education, class teacher education programs in Finland are quite similar and universities communicate with each other on key strategy to ensure high quality of class teachers across the country (Sahlberg, 2010). Ms. F from Agency C believes that that the Chinese government can learn from Finland in “*how government can get involve into the collaboration between schools and universities in education reform*”. In my opinion, this experience in education reform may also be applied in class teacher education programs since role of government is similar.

Need 2: Setting up Clear Standards

Based on the findings of Chart 2, 3 and 4, class teacher education programs in Chongqing need a concrete set of standards, which comprises program degree and credits requirements, standards for content studies (subject-based studies, pedagogical studies, theoretical studies, and practices), and requirements in various professional certificates. But in Finland, the only general requirement in class teacher education is a Masters' Degree in education or education psychology, and "teachers are trained to such a high standard that pupils, parents, heads and politicians confidently entrust young people's education to them" (NUT, 2014). But it is unclear what is this "high standard" that Finnish teachers' education is claiming? That is why it remains unknown if this Finnish standard in class teacher education programs can offer some good ideas for Chongqing.

Need 3: Truly Integrated Education in University Studies

The simple addition of subject-based learnings in universities has been burdensome for these class teacher students as they need to learn so many different subjects in short time (normally in three years). At the same time, insufficient studies on integrated education leave these students helpless in conducting any substantial integrated teaching in classrooms. To alleviate the excessive burden on class teacher students and to help them in applying cross-subject teaching in primary schools, a truly integrated curriculum is needed during their university studies. However, integrated education in Finland mostly refers to the integration of different students, either migrants or kids with special needs, while in China integrated education means the integration of different subjects. No relevant (English) information on how Finnish class teacher students learn to integrate different subjects during their university studies can be found, but the class observations in Finland show that it is a common phenomenon that class teacher integrate different subjects in their classes smoothly (Chart 8). This finding reveals that there must be a certain part of the university studies and/or teaching practices that train the class teachers to do so, which is possible for Chongqing to learn as well.

Need 4: Comprehensive Teaching Practice Plan

In terms of the last challenge of “no comprehensive teaching practice”, I collected one advice from one headmaster during the focus group discussion in County Y. He suggested that universities should send the class teacher students to primary schools in the first and second year of university studies to get familiarized with the school practices (Chart 3). But unlike the subject teachers, what the class teacher students really need is a comprehensive practice plan, which allow them to try out the teaching of different subjects and explore new teaching methods, for example integrated teaching. In Finland, the teaching practice takes place in teachers’ training schools with a purpose of “connecting the theories and practices” (Niemi and Jakku-Sihvonen, n.d.). And according to Ms. F from Agency C, the “*most advanced teaching methods and new education guidelines are applied and tested in teachers’ training school*”. Currently there are no specialized primary schools in Chongqing for class teacher students to do internship, students are assigned to different schools in counties or cities to teach one or two subjects, and usually primary schools worry that the internship may negatively affect pupils’ studies (Yu, 2016). Local government and universities need to collaborate with primary schools in providing a comprehensive practice plan for class teacher students, and the experience of running teachers’ training schools in Finland may provide Chongqing some good ideas in how to make sure that the class teachers receive comprehensive trainings and proper guidance while pupils’ study experience won’t get affected negatively.

To sum up, apart from setting up clear standards for class teacher education programs, Finland’s extensive experience in class teacher education in universities and pre-service trainings in teachers’ training schools can offer a lot of professional guidance in how government, universities, and primary schools collaborate with each other in program curriculum design and the arrangement of class teacher students’ practice/internship, which would help to improve the quality of class teacher education programs in Chongqing.

This activity of introducing Finnish class teacher education to China is in line with Finnish education export strategy. According to Schatz (2016b), educational knowledge and education know-how are part of the Finnish education export. But this expertise is intangible, which belongs to the scope of service trade. So, the next question is how this service can be delivered to China?

II. Entry Strategy for Finnish Expertise in Class Teacher Education

Based on the previous literature studies, there are four modes of service trade: cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence, and presence of natural persons (Knight, 2002), and there are four major types of entry mode: exporting, licensing/franchising, joint venture, and sole venture (Ekeledo and Sivakumar, 1998). In terms of higher education sector, as discussed in foreign market entry strategy, sole venture is not an option in China (GATS/SC/135, 2002). So, in the following discussion, I am going to combine the trade modes and entry modes into three major options, and I will discuss each option regarding the case of bringing Finnish expertise in class teacher education to Chongqing.

- Exporting: cross-border supply, which include distance education, e-learning; consumption abroad, which normally refers to students/scholars studying in another country; and presence of natural persons, which is usually in the form of professors, teachers, and researchers working abroad.
- Licensing/Franchising: a type of commercial presence including twining partnership and franchising agreements with local institutions.
- Joint Venture: a type of commercial presence including local branches or satellite campuses.

Exporting

Currently Finland does not have any ready-made product or service (Schatz, 2016b). For Chinese clients, the education offerings are designed case by case (Ms. F), so the direct “cross-border supply” of existing textbooks or a complete solution is not available. But the Chinese government officials, educators or students can learn from Finland either by visiting Finland through “consumption abroad” or by inviting Finnish experts to China to give professional services through “presence of natural persons”. Both directions of movements are common practices between China and Finland in teacher’s training sector, as shown in the interview with Ms. F (Chart 6). In the case of class teacher education, Chinese experts from normal universities and government officials in-charge can visit Finland to learn how the class teachers are educated in universities and teachers’ training schools. On the other side, Finland can bring professors in teachers’ education sector and related government

officials to Chongqing to give guidance in how to design a more balanced and unified curriculum, and how government can participate in regulation and coordination. However, this guidance should be done carefully with extensive background studies ahead. I was really surprised when Ms. F told me that they normally don't do market research, and the projects are designed based on clients' (mostly education committees) needs, which means that they probably do not really know the real needs of these end users, i.e., in-service teachers (Chart 7). Class teacher education for rural areas is of great importance in China, and many projects initiated by the government have not yet met their objectives. To give practical guidance, Finnish experts have to immerse themselves into the rural areas to fully understand the limitations and challenges that are out of their previous knowledge and experience. However, despite of these challenges, exporting entry mode is still the easiest and least committed way of bringing Finnish expertise in class teacher education to China.

Licensing or Franchising

Licensing or franchising requires a much higher commitment from Finland. Finnish higher education institutions can work with Chinese normal universities in setting up twinning programs or franchising. However, according to Teegen (2000), country-of-origin plays an important role in international franchising. Finland's national image is well recognized in big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai (Ms. F), but it remains unknown how Chongqing would perceive Finland and Finnish higher education. Also, Finnish education is less profit-oriented than its American and British counterparts, the entry choice of franchising may undermine the "public image" of Finnish higher education, which is one of the good features that Finnish education enjoys (Ms. F). Besides, apart from University of Helsinki, most of the Finnish higher education institutions do not have high prestige internationally (Cai, Hölttä, and Kivistö, 2012), so it would add difficulty for most of the Finnish universities to seek collaborations. At the same time, twinning programs may be a good idea, but due to the huge difference in program structure and degree requirement of class teacher education in Finland and Chongqing, the actual operation of twinning programs may be troublesome.

Joint-Venture (Zhong Wai He Zuo Ban Xue)

The last entry option would be setting up joint-ventures, which is also called “Zhong Wai He Zuo Ban Xue” in Chinese. Compared with the previous two options, this is probably the most challenging option since it requires lots of efforts from both Finland and Chongqing. Finnish higher education institution needs to be able to design a whole localized program based on Finnish core assets in class teacher education, which includes but not limited to curriculum design, choice or design of textbooks, students’ enrollment standard, and degree requirements. In addition, to ensure high quality, Finnish higher education institution needs to move some Finnish teaching stuff to Chongqing, which will not be an easy task as Altbach (2015) has already pointed out the difficulty in relocating teaching and research stuff from home campus to foreign countries. On the other side of the university in Chongqing, they need to provide infrastructures and most important, the license. In China, there is a concern that the foreign education providers may undermine Chinese education sovereignty, so joint-ventures are strictly regulated by Chinese government (Li, 2009). Also, according to Ms. F, the central government has been tightening up the international cooperation, so acquiring a license would be extremely difficult. Joint-venture, as the third option, requires higher education institutions from both China and Finland as well as local Chinese government to firstly build a strong confidence in each other, which can not be achieved overnight. Another option of joint-venture would be inviting agencies to join. Agency C has the plan of setting up an international school in Shanghai, but it has been postponed indefinitely. However, this might be a turning point for Agency C to look for opportunities in “small cities”. Even though Ms. F has shown her concern in the acceptance of foreign providers in small cities, Chongqing is not a “small city” in the sense of size and economic development: it is one of the four provincial-level municipalities populated with 36.7 million people, and it is one of the fastest growing metropolitan city in China with 10.7% growth in GDP in 2016 (xinhuanet, 2017). Agency can leverage on their extensive experience in teachers’ training schools in Finland and experience in collaboration with education committees in Beijing and Shanghai to build an international school in Chongqing with a function of providing teaching practices for these class teacher students.

To sum up, “exporting” of trainings to Chinese educators and government officials may be a good starting point to acquire local knowledge and to build trust. So far, class teacher education in Chongqing is focusing on rural areas, but the undeniable fact is that class teacher education is a major trend internationally, and the Government guideline of 2016 from Chongqing Education Committee has not mentioned “rural areas” or “rural education”

in its objective at all, instead it comes up with new demands in “education research” and “life-long learning”. Ms. E from University B also believes that class teacher education will be the future trend in training primary school teachers. The changing focus from rural areas to general primary schools will create a larger market, where Finland can take advantage of the experience in “exporting” and explore the possibility of franchising or setting up joint-ventures in the near future. This can also be seen as adopting the “Uppsala Model” through incremental internationalization process from exporting, to franchising, to joint-venture and finally to sole venture (Healey, 2008).

5.4 Answer towards the Main Question

How Finland can bring its Class Teacher Education to China for the primary schools in rural areas?

Based on the extensive discussions of previous sub-research questions, there are three key parts for the answer of this main question.

The first part is a profound understanding of the primary education in rural China as discussed in sub-RQ1. Since the class teacher education in Chongqing is aiming at rural areas, so Finnish experts need to build their knowledge of the real limitations and challenges in rural China. This knowledge can be partly acquired from the local government officials and research scholars, but more importantly, it needs to be gained through immersion in the environment. For example, the government official will probably tell that the major problem is lack of teachers in rural areas, but my research in the primary schools indicates that the more severe problem would be inadequate education on minor subjects.

Building on the knowledge of primary education in rural China, the second part is a “problem-solution” matching process, which requires Finland to firstly find out the major problems of the current class teacher education programs in China/Chongqing and then to identify the key assets of Finnish class teacher education that can be used to solve (most of) the problems. This “problem-solution” matching process has been elaborated in sub-RQ2, and I have concluded that China can learn from Finland in how government, universities,

and primary schools work together to carry out a systematic education for class teacher students in universities and teachers' training schools.

The third part is regarding the entry strategy that Finland should adopt. In the discussion of sub-RQ3, I suggest Finland to adopt the "Uppsala Model" of entering the Chinese market by firstly exporting through giving trainings. Then with the accumulated knowledge and increased commitment to the local market, Finnish higher education institutions or agencies can move up along the Uppsala model and explore other strategies as franchising or joint-ventures.

To sum up, entering Chinese market is not an easy task as this market is so diversified and is full of international and local competitors. Finland, as a latecomer in China, needs to choose their most competitive education export product and to identify a niche market for this product. Finland's class teacher education belongs to the higher education sector, but it directly contributes to its world-famous success in basic education, which should be one of its most competitive export product. On the other side, class teacher education programs in Chongqing work as a perfect niche market for Finland: first, since class teacher education is new in China, there won't be any local competitors in the near future; second, Chongqing is not among the first tier cities (such as Beijing and Shanghai), which means there are not many international competitors either; last, Finland's expertise in class teacher education can perfectly solve (most of) the problems in Chongqing through giving professional trainings to educators and government officials, which can be the first step of building trust between Finland and China.

6. Conclusion

In this final section, there will be four parts to be discussed: a final summary of this study, limitation of this study, recommendations for future research based on limitations and new perspectives, and managerial implications for education businesses.

6.1 Final Remark

In the past a few years, Finnish education export strategy has been a popular topic as finally Finland is looking for ways to commercialize its education offerings in foreign markets. However, as discussed in the introduction section of this thesis, few studies have been focused on what exactly Finland is exporting and to where Finland is exporting. My thesis is aiming at identifying a competitive Finnish education product, a potential foreign market for this product, and a rational way to “export” this product

In previous literature review section, Schatz (2016b) has listed a few items that Finland can export, and she (2016a) has also identified the problem that Finland is trying to use its success in basic education to promote the whole education sector, including higher education, vocational education, and so on. However, it is teacher’s education that is regarded as one of the key factors that contributes to this excellent basic education (Sahlberg, 2011a). And literature studies on teachers’ education in Finland have shown that despite a few challenges, Finland still enjoys an excellent teachers’ education system that prepares high quality teachers, including class teachers. On the other side, literature studies on teachers’ education in China have implied that there is an urgent need in educating proper class teachers for primary schools in rural China. For many places, class teacher education programs are seen as “remedies” for solving long-lasting problems in rural areas, however, some scholars are concerned with the quality and its underlying problems of these programs (Jiang, 2016; Liu, 2016).

To find out what are the real problems of these class teacher programs in China, how Finland’s expertise in class teacher education can help to solve these problems, and in which way this Finnish expertise can be brought to China, a field research was done in Chongqing.

This field research has three major contributions. First, it confirms that the current class teacher education programs in Chongqing suffer from several serious problems, including no coordination, no clear standards, no real integrated education, and no comprehensive teaching practices. However, most of those problems (exclude “no clear standards”) can be solved by Finland’s expertise in class teacher education in universities and teachers’ training schools, which is the second contribution of the field research. The last contribution lies in the choice of entry strategy. Based on the literature studies on entry strategy and interview with Ms. F from Agency C, this thesis suggests Finnish higher education institutions or agencies to bring this expertise through giving professional trainings first, and later they can leverage on this experience and explore other entry strategies such as franchising or joint-venture.

6.2 Limitations

As mentioned previously in the methodology section, I had many challenges in getting the chances of conducting interviews to acquire certain information in China, so this research has two limitations.

First, the data collected from the field is heavily concentrated on University A, while less information is gained from University B, especially information of the last year students who are also doing their internship. Due to the huge difference in program guidelines, class teacher students of University B will probably have very different experience of their internship, which may generate different opinions of class teacher education programs and class teacher students from primary school headmasters and local government official. So, the data generated from the field research may give an incomplete “image” about the general class education programs in whole Chongqing area.

The second limitation lies in the lack of information about the attitudes of local government, i.e., Chongqing Education Committee. As the department in charge of international cooperation, Chongqing Education Committee has the absolute power in deciding whether an international project can be implemented or not. Finnish expertise in class teacher education and the way of entering this market will be subjected to the careful examination

by Chongqing Education Committee, and no information was gathered about how and based on what they will check the legitimacy of “importing” Finnish class teacher education to Chongqing.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research are based on the limitations of the research and some other theoretical perspectives, thus there will be two types of recommendations: new field research and new theoretical perspectives.

- **Field research**

Due to the limitation in gaining certain information, I would recommend conducting a holistic survey of class teacher students and professors from five normal universities in Chongqing to build a complete set of information on how the class teacher education is carried out in each university. Then, we can further shape Finland’s offerings to better serve five universities all together. Also, from September 2017, the first cohort of class teacher students will go back to their counties and start teaching in primary schools. A field research to study their experience of in-service life would be beneficial to reflect on how the class teacher education programs can be improved to better prepare them for the teaching career in rural areas. In terms of finding out how to work with the local government to earn legitimacy, the researcher himself or herself needs to be “legitimate” in doing research projects in China first. My experience with Chongqing Education Committee revealed one fact: government officials are very cautious with students or researchers from a foreign institution, they would prefer to talk to someone from a Chinese higher institution with a certified recommendation letter from this institution. Thus, all field researches listed above require a strategic collaboration with one or some of the normal universities in Chongqing to secure the accesses to all these informants and approvals to conduct a holistic research with class teacher students, universities, and government officials.

- **Theoretical Perspectives**

When I was looking for a methodology that can guide my research, there are a few other methodologies that fit the purpose of this research, but due to the limitation of the field research and time limit of a master's thesis, I discarded these options. But these methodologies can be very interesting for further researcher(s) if time and research accessed can be guaranteed.

The first option is “action research”. According to Huang (2010), action research “requires researches to work with practitioners”, and it aims at more than “understanding” but also “generating knowledge” through actions. An approach of action research for a further research would be getting involved in the real actions of designing a customized education offering for Chongqing and acquiring feedback from all five normal universities and government officials on how they perceive this “product”, which would provide more beneficial information for Finnish organizations who want to export their class teacher education.

The second option is looking at this research problem as a “wicked problem”, which refers to “a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decisions markers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing” (Rittel, n.d. cited in Buchanan, 1992). My research problem has its wickedness since it involves various stakeholders (class teacher students, universities, primary schools, and governments in China, and higher education institutions, companies, and government departments in Finland), and each stakeholder will have their own values and priorities. For example, Chongqing government started the class teacher education primarily to meet the shortage of teachers, while class teacher students themselves see it as a trend to be able to teach different subjects in primary schools, and headmasters of primary school worry more about the teaching quality of these class teacher students. Seeing the research problem as a wicked problem would push the researcher(s) to dive into the collection of information from various stakeholders to understand the complexity of the problem and to come up with innovative solutions to cope with this problem, for example, design thinking approach (Buchanan, 1992) and knowledge network approach (Weber and Khademian, 2008).

6.4 Managerial Implications

Based on the research findings, there are two managerial implications in terms of Finnish education export to China.

The first implication focuses on “knowing your market”. Agency C from Finland has been working with education committees in Beijing and Shanghai, which are the most internationalized cities in China. It is reasonable that Finnish companies tap into the Chinese market from these two huge cities, but they should always keep their eyes open for other niche markets, which requires to be knowledgeable about national and local policy as well as new education programs across the country with an acute business sense. The findings of teachers’ in-service training in Chart 6 is pointing at a potential market. As mentioned in the previous literature review of teachers’ education in China, in-service training is increasingly seen as a way to promote the professional development of teachers, especially for teachers in rural areas. Since “Bao Ban Zhi” (one teacher teaches several subjects of one class) still widely exists in rural areas, some Finnish training organizations can take advantage of the Chinese “National Training Program” and provide trainings to prepare these “Bao Ban teachers” to teach other subjects. For example, in many Finnish universities, teacher students can take a minor in arts education or music education. These minor programs can be transformed into a short-term in-service training for Mathematics or Chinese teachers in rural China to teach drawing or singing.

The second implication focuses on “knowing your users”. Since local education committees are usually the “buyer” of an education product, it is tempting to meet all the requirements of them without probing into the needs of the “users”, i.e., in-service teachers or universities. As shown in the literature and research findings in Chart 6, some of the problems of in-service trainings are tightly linked to the improperly designed courses, where teachers find them useless or not applicable in their own classes. Thus, I would suggest any Finnish organization who wants to get involved in doing education business with China to understand both your clients’ and users’ needs to carry out the right product.

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Appendices

Chart 1: Problems of the Primary schools in rural China

Chart I: Problems of the Primary schools in rural China							
Theme I	I.1 Exam-oriented Education	I.2 Decreasing Students' Number	I.3 Low Teachers' Quality	I.4 Lack of Teachers	I.5 Lack of in-service Training	I.6 Inadequate Education on Minor Subjects	I.7 Values towards Rural Areas
Mr. D	Chinese, Maths, and English are the main courses, other minor subjects are not important.	No. of students drops increasingly. Parents tend to send kids to study in cities.	Burnout of the middle-aged teachers, do not want to learn or change.	“Baoban teachers” can teach CN&maths, but not other subjects; Two babies policy leads to the lack of female teachers, who are the majority of the teachers’ team.		Minor subjects usually get replaced. Some teachers suggest not to teach minor subjects.	
FG - Headmasters				Every subject lacks teacher (school 2); Lack teachers in science and PE since the teacher is sick (school 6); Lack of Chinese teacher due to maternity leave (school 5).			
FG - CTSs	Exam-oriented education is deeply rooted (student 6).						
Ms. E				Two baby policy leads to the lack of teachers. Teachers want to move up to better places.			Teachers do not want to stay in rural areas.
Ms. G		Students’ parents prefer to send their kids to towns or cities or to private schools for better education.	Lack EN teachers, and since she passed College English Band 6, she was assigned to be English teacher, but her academic background is in history.	She did not receive any training on EN education; She wants to attend training abroad to open her mind and to get new inspirations.	Two EN classes per week, not as important as CN&Maths; Students regard EN homework as less prior, and they don’t finish the homework; CEE has lowered the score for EN, the EN education will be even less important in rural areas.		
Ms. H			Lack of CN teacher, but her background is in arts. When the school lacks certain subject teachers, other teachers will be forced to teach these subjects regardless their own backgrounds.	Teachers who are forced to teach other subjects do not receive adequate trainings; Most of the training opportunities were given to the school leaders rather than young teachers.	One drawing teacher left, some classes won’t have drawing classes any more; Some substitute teachers just read the textbooks or ask the students to study themselves; Music and drawing classes are not important because they won’t be counted in class/school evaluation.		
Ms. F						Arts education is less important compared with CN & Maths.	Before they start build up their own values, the kids were educated that countryside is a poor and bad place, and once you have opportunities, you should leave.

Chart 2: CTEP in Chongqing

Theme 2	2.1 Education Objectives	2.2 Graduation Requirements	2.3 External Cooperation	2.4 Curriculum Design	2.5 Students' Background	2.6 Students' Motivations	2.7 Viewpoint on CTEP	2.8 Suggestion on CTEP
Mr. D				Curriculum is decided by the CQ education committee and HEIs.	Students are from different counties, about 40 students each county.		Students' have jobs secured, some of them are not studying so hard.	
FG – Headmasters							It is meaningful (school 2); We support CTEP, primary school teachers should know everything (school 6); Most of the students cannot teach English (school 2).	
FG – CTSs							Lack of deep studies on minor subjects (music, drawing, and PE) (student 3, 4, 5, 7)	
FG - Government							CTEP has trained excellent teachers for this town.	To understand the needs of future students and the curriculum.
Ms. E		No compulsory requirement on passing College English test yet.			Most of the students are from counties, “not wealthy” families since they don’t need to pay, and they receive money; Most of the students are from integrated science background.	They want to work back in their hometown, it is a way to release the family burden, and it is easier for working life being a local.	The CTEP will be the trend for educating primary school teachers, and the job-location binding will be cancelled.	
Ms. Government	In short term to meet the shortage of teachers, and it maybe adjusted in the future.			The curriculum is designed by HEIs.				
Doc UA	Focus on rural basic education, full development, good morality in mind and profession, skills in teamwork, communication, and life-long learning, passion for basic education, wide knowledge with full capabilities, able to teach CN, Maths, EN, music, arts and other subjects.	188 credits, Teacher Certificate, Mandarin Proficiency Test (2 nd Class Upper), National Computer Ranking Examination (level 1), and National College English Band 6.						

Doc UB	Based on the professional development of teachers, meet the needs of basic education reform in rural areas, love education in rural areas, full development, good morality in mind and profession, master basic theories, knowledge and skills of each subject, meet the needs of cross-subjects teaching, become the excellent class teachers who is willing to stay in rural areas and can teach well.	160 credits, standard Mandarin, standard handwriting, proficient skills in computer, master one foreign language and its application.	Working with teachers' training institutions and primary schools in pedagogical and practice courses.				It meets the international trend in class teacher system; It helps to solve the shortage of teachers in rural areas; It meets the challenge of basic education reform in subjects integration; It helps to ease pupils' burden and promote the full-quality oriented education.	
Doc Government	Passion for basic education, love students, meet the needs of basic education reform, wide cultural and scientific knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, good cultivation in arts, education theories, education skills, be able to conduct education research and (class/school) management, life-long learning, capable of teaching multiple subjects.	162 credits, Mandarin Proficiency Test (2 nd Class Upper), handwriting test, National College English test, National Computer Ranking test.		The curriculum needs to have full-subjects structure, to be practice-oriented, to integrated different subjects, and to extend CTSS' specialty.				

Chart 3: Problems of CTEP

Theme 3	3.1 Guideline from Government	3.2 No systematic textbooks	3.3 Wide Coverage of subjects	3.4 Inadequate studies on Minor Subjects	3.5 Rigid Student-Gov-HEI contract	3.6 No Clear requirements on Subject studies	3.7 Others
Mr. D	The program guideline from the Government has changed several times.	Two years ago, the plan was that HEIs work together to design the textbooks for CTEP, but so far they are still using the existing textbooks.			Students have to work in the agreed county for 6 years. Students cannot attend the graduate school, and if student does not graduate or work at the arranged primary school, they will need to pay the fine of about 100k CNY.		
FG – CTSS			Too many things need to be learnt so quickly (student 3 & 4).	The studies on music and painting were too superficial and not enough (student 3, 4); I			Many theories and knowledge studied in university are not related with the things that I need

				didn't learn much from the PE courses, and they are useless, so I don't know how to teach (student 5); I didn't have any courses on science subject (student 7).			to teach (student 3); Painting professor did not know how to teach the CTSs (student 4).
FG - Government			The CTSs study too shallow, and they do not meet the needs of students.				
Ms. E			We have to learn so many things, but the study on each subject is very superficial. We are not able to learn everything.		Students cannot attend graduate school, otherwise they have to pay the fine. One student is still negotiating with the school.	Every teacher's requirement is different, and there is no common standard; There is no clear requirement whether student needs to pass the College EN test (band 4).	Most of the students would not prefer the English direction.
Document - Government		HEIs should work together to develop the textbooks for truly integrated education.					

Chart 4: Curriculum of the CTEP						
Theme 4	4.1 Courses on Chinese & Mathematics	4.2 Course on Minor Subjects	4.3 Non-relevant Compulsory Courses	4.4 Pedagogical Studies in General	4.5 Arrangements of the Course Modules	4.6 Others
Document UA	Chinese related courses (29 credits; 15.4%); Math related courses (17; 9%).	English related courses (12 credits; 6%); Painting (10; 5.3%); Music & Dance (8; 4%); PE (8; 4%); Science (5; 2.6%).	Socialist studies (21 credits; 11%).	Pedagogical studies (22/23 credits; 11%).	*See chart 4.5 below	Compulsory studies on integrated education (1.5 credits)
Document UB	Chinese related courses (literature direction: 21/23 - 13%; science direction: 13/15 - 8%); Maths related courses (science direction: 20/24 - 12.5%; literature direction: 12/16 - 7.5%).	English related courses (literature direction: 21.5 - 13.4%; science direction: 13.5 - 8.4%); Painting (painting direction: 11.5 - 7.2%; non: 7.5 - 4.7%); Music & Dance (direction: 19 - 11.9%; non: 11 - 6.9%); PE (direction: 8 - 5%; non: 4 - 2.5%); Society & Science (8 - 5%).	Socialist studies (8.5 credits; 5.3%)	Pedagogical studies (31 credits; 19.4%).		Elective studies on Special Education (2 credits); Elective studies on left-behind kids in rural China (1 credits)
Document Government	Chinese related courses (literature direction: 27 - 16.7%; non: 16 - 9.9%); Maths related courses (science direction: 24 - 14.8%; non: 14 - 8.6%).	English (literature direction: 17 - 10.5%; non: 12 - 7.4%); Painting & Calligraphy (arts direction: 16 - 9.9%; non: 10 - 6.2%); Music & Dance (arts direction: 10 - 6.2%; non: 6 - 3.7%); PE & Health (PE direction: 15 - 9.3%; non: 7 - 4.3%); Science (science direction: 7 - 4.3%; non: 1.9%); Society (social direction: 11 - 6.8%; non: 3 - 1.9%).	Socialist studies (16 credits; 9.9%)	Pedagogical studies (34.5 credits; 21.3 %)		Compulsory studies on integrated education (2 credits); Students' psychology, school management, and education research are elective studies. This guideline only works as a reference.

Chart 5: Internship for Class Teacher Students								
Theme 5	5.1 Internship Type	5.2 Preparation in HEIs	5.3 Internship Support	5.4 Performance of CTSs	5.5 Challenges for CTSs	5.6 Learnings in Schools	5.7 Suggestions for CTSs	5.8 Suggestions on Internship Arrangement
Mr. D	Internship is arranged at nine districts and lasts for one semester; Every year the locations are different.							
FG - Headmasters	School 1		We arrange one coaching teacher for this CTS.	This CTS has good ideological quality, regards herself as a teacher and interacts with students, she is willing to study, the review of other teachers and pupils is good.	CTSs' life on weekend is a bit difficult.		CTSs should learn first how to solve his/her own living problems, they should have a mind preparation for equalization of each subject	
	School 2	For the subjects that lack teachers.		Attitude of teaching is good, but they still have some problems in teaching.	Most of the CTSs cannot teach English.			
	School 3			Team spirit is good, is willing to learn from other teachers, and they help each other among new teachers.	There are challenges for students to do cross-subject teaching.		Interact more with in-service teachers during internship, combine theory with practices.	
	School 4		School has "One to One" support for interns, and weekly meet-up to share good and bad things, problems and solutions.				Internship is a very good study opportunity. Students should have a sense of responsibility.	
	School 5	For the position of maternity leave and teachers who went for trainings.	Key teachers as coaches. Students learn first in the classes of these key teachers and then receive guidance.	Much better than other subject-based teacher students. His teaching is good. He can give PE courses and offer good impact on arts education. He is active in learning and wants to attend training on new textbooks.				
	School 6	For lack of Chinese teachers, and for sick teachers in science and PE.		In general, the teaching is good. He is self-motivated, willing to learn from other teachers.	Since for each class, teachers have their own way of teaching, CTSs has a gap between theories and		The real practices and theories have to be balanced.	There should be internship in the first and second year of bachelor to gain practical experience

						practices. Most of the interns are not good at teaching music.			in school management and teaching methods. There should be a process from theories to practices.
FG - CTSs	Student 1	Teach Chinese for grade five, and music for three different grades.		The coaching teacher is the key teacher in Chinese.			Most of the learnings are attending Chinese classes.		
	Student 2	Teach Chinese		School has offered a lot of support and guidance.		The learning from the university and the content for teaching are different. I feel difficult in teaching.			
	Student 3		The learnings in music and paintings should be deeper and more.			Many of the things that I learnt in the university are not related to the things that I need to teach.			
	Student 4		The learning in music is not enough, and it broke off during the study.						
	Student 5	Teach PE.	The PE studies during the first and second year in university are useless.			I don't know how to give PE classes since I didn't have enough studies.	I watch how other people teach, and try to do the same.		
	Student 6	Teach Chinese.				At the beginning, I don't know to teach and how to face the students. The idea and reality have a huge difference.	Every kid is very different. You have to prepare a few options when you are planning your classes.		
	Student 7	Teach Science.	I haven't learnt any related courses in university.						
FG - Government				Local government gives "one to one" or "two to one" support, and life support in				CTSs should grow themselves in life and teaching. They need to improve their teaching and	

			accommodation and safety education.				quickly transfer theories into practices; CTSs should prepare themselves for the future students and understand the general education guidelines; CTSs should also psychologically prepare themselves for the life in rural areas.	
Ms. E	For the 2012 students, they have one-week internship in the second year already, but for the 2014 students, they will have two-weeks internship until third year; Before they do the internship in the destination schools, but now they do the internship in both the cities and rural areas.							

Chart 6: Teachers' In-service Training					
Theme 6	6.1 The Design of IST	6.2 IST Format	6.3 National/Local Support in IST	6.4 Challenges for IST	6.5 Suggestions for IST
Mr. D			"National Training Plan" with 500 million CNY investment.	Teachers are not so active in joining IST since they won't get paid during the training and the training may affect their teaching plan.	
FG - Government					Normal universities can communicate more with in-service teachers, to study the needs and strengthen the teachers' in-service trainings.
Ms. Government	Organizations or companies have to submit their plans, and education committee will organize experts to evaluate these plans, which is known as "bidding".				

Ms. G				The training content is empty, people do not have passion for the training.	I want to attend training abroad to expand my vision and get new inspirations in EN education.
Ms. H			National support cannot really benefit the teachers in the front line. There are too many levels in between.	Most of the good training programs are given to the school leaders. But these leaders are very old, even after the training, they are still doing the things the old way. The young teachers normally don't get the good training opportunities.	Good in-service trainings should be provided to these young teachers, who are willing to learn. Young teachers should get to know the outside world.
Ms. F	All the IST projects are designed case by case; Our projects are based on the needs of Chinese customers; The training arrangement is very intensive, teachers have to attend classes from 8 to 5 every weekday for three weeks in Finland.	Two directions: in Beijing, mostly the Finnish expert comes to Beijing to give trainings; in Shanghai, mostly teachers go to Finland for training; Most of the trainings take places in the schools rather than in a lecture room.		Teachers are not active for the training: first, every teacher is full with his/her own schedule, and many of them have to use their personal time for trainings; second, number of teaching classes counts an important part of their salaries, but the training does not count in salary system; third, teachers find the things they learn from the trainings cannot be applied in their own classes; last, some teachers are negative in the identity of being a teacher, thus not willing to make progress.	

Chart 7: Finnish Education Export									
Theme 7	7.1 Finnish Education & Educators	7.2 Core Asset of Finnish Education	7.3 National Reputation	7.4 The "Gap"	7.5 Competition & Competitors	7.6 Partners	7.7 Big cities & countryside	7.8 Finnish Way	7.9 Others
Ms. F	The good education of Finland is because these teachers have received good education since they were young; The phenomenon-based education in Finland has attracted a lot of international attention; Finns' passion for education; Finnish education is for every kid in the schools, they want	We have a teachers' training school, where the most advanced teaching methods and new education guidelines are applied and tested, so we have the resources of the core asset of Finnish education, which also includes the collaborations between schools, universities, and how government can get involved in education reform, this is what the Chinese government needs; Agency SC has been	Finland has one advantage as its PISA result is famous; Finnish education is well recognized in big cities, people have a very strong concept towards Finnish education; In smaller cities, when they have to choose education programs between US and Finland, they tend to choose US as US is a better-known country; If agency SC has opened an international school, and the quality is not good, then it will ruin the Finnish reputation; Agency SC has been advertising itself as an Finnish brand, but I	Many of our Chinese customers want a whole package to try out; Very often, our Chinese customers want to see some materials first, for example a set of textbooks, but we don't	The education products offered by US and UK are profits-oriented; The quality of education providers from US and UK are varied, and you can not tell if they are official organizations;	We collaborate with Education Committee of Shanghai and Beijing; Educluster has the resources from University of Jyväskylä and University of Helsinki; We have been thinking of working with agency SC, but we are concerned	Arts education is more acceptable in big cities; Foreign education providers are more acceptable in big cities; Big cities like to try new things; Finland and Finnish education are more acceptable in big cities; In smaller cities, when they have to choose education programs between US and Finland, they tend to	We don't have to start in big scale. Finnish people do things slowly so that they can adjust during the process; I think sometimes the Finns are too serious, sometimes they have to understand other needs of the teachers under training programs, for example the needs for shopping; Many Finns cannot compromise, for	We want to open an international school. But nowadays, international cooperation has been tightened up by the national government, so it is very difficult to make a change; In the future, we want to become a NGO, doing projects to support the education development in China; We didn't do any market research for

	everyone to receive the same quality education.	advertising itself as an Finnish brand, but I don't think they have the resources of core assets of Finnish education	don't think they have the resources of core assets of Finnish education, which may not be good for Finnish image.	have existing textbooks.	FICEA is not our competitor	that they will say that we are an affiliate agency under them.	choose US as US is a better-known country.	example, they won't allow to use too much time in touring during the training.	trainings, we design the trainings based on clients' needs.
Mr. D									The international cooperation should be decided by Chongqing Education committee.

Chart 8: Teaching in Primary Schools.								
Theme 8		8.1 Classroom Setting	8.2 Students' Group Work	8.3 Interaction between teachers and students	8.4 Design of teaching	8.5 Integration of different subjects	8.6 Class Teachers' Role	8.7 Assisting teaching materials & facilities
Class – County Y	Chinese Class	Typical classroom setting in China with the teacher in the front and students sit in rows; Windows and back blackboards have decorations (paintings and posters).	Students were asked to discuss in pairs in the Chinese class.	Teacher raises up questions, students answer the question				TV, computer, speaker;
	Music Class			Teacher was singing together with the students, and she invited the students to play the guessing game.		Music and a bit of dancing were integrated.		computer, speaker, projector screen, and other simple music instruments.
Class - Salo	Handcraft Class	Classrooms are usually decorated with students' profile pics, posters, and other art works. Students normally sit in a round shape.	Students are separated into different groups representing different levels of the ancient Egypt society.	Class teachers and assistant teachers give many one-to-one guidance to the students; There is one girl who wants to make the doll in a different way, so she has one teacher gives her personal guidance.	We have two class teachers to work in pair to design this class.	This class is integrated with history, arts and handcraft	“Being a class teacher in primary school does not mean that you know a lot of things in each subject, but know how to work with the kids to help them to learn.”	Foam, needle, knife, wool, and so on.
	Biology Class		3-4 students as a group in making a clay model of the farm that they have visited last week.	During this biology class, teacher is teaching students the Finnish names of the farm animals.		Handcraft integrated with biology class.		Clay, wool, tooth pick, boards, grains, and so on.

	Arts Class			Teachers are guiding the students on design a Father's Day gift card by asking questions.	"It takes time for me to think about what to do. I want to do something that I would like to do with the students."		"In our teachers' education, the bottom line is that you have to admit that each kid is unique, and we have to see them as an individual."	
	"God Parents" Class		Students from Grade 6 (God Parent) and students from Grade 1 are working in pairs: grade 1 students draw the father's stories, and grade 6 students transform the drawings into a written story.	One main teacher gives the instruction, and then several teachers giving one-to-one guidance while students are working on their gift card.	"I study from online sources. I talk to other teachers, and I also ask the students."	According to the new curriculum guideline, we should combine things. Teachers can combine everything as they want.	"We want every child to learn, and we support every kid. This is inclusive education."	Papers, colour pens, and computers.
	*After Classes				Around 2 pm, 4 teachers were having a meeting in the teachers' office to share positive things about each other so that they can learn from each other and improve. Three groups: Teachers of grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4, and grades 5 and 6 are meeting within the group every two weeks to share information and experience.			
Class - Helsinki	Music Class	Teacher in the front, and students sitting in rows.	Students working in different groups to play different instruments to make a harmony.	Teacher give general and one-to-one guidance on how to play certain instrument to make the right sound.				Piano, and other various instruments.
	Arts Class	Students are sitting in different groups with four desks in the middle.	Students work in different groups to draw different colour themes. (*Students clean up all the materials they have used and put them back in their original places.)	One class teacher gives one-to-one guidance to every student while she was walking around the class. There were a few students messing around, the teacher was very patient and trying to calm these students down gently.			"Class teacher in primary school is to understand how to teach rather than build up deep understanding of each subject."	A3 papers, brushes, pigments, projector screen, computer, and so on.

